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The Rose and the Thorn

THE ROSE AND THE THORN

SEMIOTIC STRUCTURES IN MOROCCO

Roger Joseph
and
Terri Brint Joseph

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This book is dedicated,
With love and gratitude,
To our parents

To Dean Brint Cutchall

To the memory of
Lou French Hatchett Cutchall

To the memories of
Roger Joseph, Sr.
Geraldine Elizabeth Perry Joseph

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Acknowledgments

A DISCOURSE is constructed of the ideas it contains; but it is also constituted by the people who take part in the development of those ideas. Authors obviously have something in mind when they enunciate a text; their ideas, however, are reflections of other people who, either directly or indirectly, participate in the discussion. Numerous debts, both intellectual and material, have been incurred since first we arrived in Morocco.

Every ethnography has a collective debt to the people who had the misfortune of being its subject. The genesis of *The Rose and the Thorn* took place during eighteen months in 1965–66 when a host of bemused Rifi Berbers tolerated our quaint customs. We hope that they will forgive this book its faults and claim its merits as their own. We are also indebted to our neighbor and creditor in Alhucemas, the late Señor Juan Dominguez Arjona and his wife Señora Ascensión Gonzáles Pérez de Dominguez. Financial support was forthcoming from that beneficient patron of anthropology, the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

For helping us make sense of things Moroccan, we are particularly grateful to Pierre Bourdieu, Clifford Geertz, Ernest Gellner, and David Hart. Our intellectual debt to these men will be obvious to any reader familiar with Maghrebi literature; less obvious, but certainly no less important, are the kindness, criticism, and encouragement they extended us. We also owe special debts of gratitude to Pedro and Hazel Carrasco, Mike and Mary Smith, and Dale and Christine Eickelman for intellectual stimulation and friendship.

Susan Wright put up with our madness as she typed various versions of this manuscript and drew the illustrations of the wedding chest. Many other people have offered advice of one sort or another. They know who they are and if we have not yet thanked them, this is a late time to begin.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the gifts, both spiritual and financial, given us by our parents, to whom, with love, this book is dedicated.

Note on Orthography

THE TRANSLITERATION of Berber terms and locations entails several problems. There is no consensus on local names and terminology in scholarly literature, and quite different spellings occur in French, Spanish, and English. There is, in fact, no agreement among scholars about correct English forms. Complicating this confusion is the plethora of variant terms used in neighboring tribes.

In order to bring some consistency to this orthographic confusion, we have generally followed Hart (1976); where we have not, the disagreement has been minor.

ONE

Introduction to Rifi Semiotics

EVERY CULTURE is an instantiation of a particular way of existence, a system of ideas and activities, mental and material tools by which a group of human beings communicates with one another. Cultures, in this sense, are dialogues both in the world and about the world. The people inside the culture learn the grammar of this dialogue through the experience of communicating with one another, an experience conditioned by practical necessities and the overarching values which reflect past experiences. The question for the outsider is, "How can we make sense of this communication, based as it is on a code which we have not experienced?" This is a question all anthropologists ask themselves; unhappily, they come to many different, often contradictory, answers.

The answer we propose is to employ a semiotic mode of analysis by which we examine institutions, exchanges, and aesthetic domains as elements in a web of decipherable communication. We assume that embedded in Moroccan culture are certain rule-like consistencies which operate in similar ways even though occurring in disparate cultural domains. The messages sent by the members of Berber tribes located in the Rif Mountains of Morocco when they exchange gifts are similar to the messages sent when they enter contracts, express themselves in poetry, seek out allies, organize rituals, or constitute their cosmology. Each one of these various aspects of culture is a system invested with certain codified significance; the messages in one realm create resonances in adjacent realms. The signs exchanged between "sender" and "receiver" in

one set of relationships having to do with political dominance, for example, turn up in presumably different vehicles of meaning such as the *izran* poetry sung at wedding rituals. Every exchange of words, deeds, gestures, or commodities "stands for something." But what it stands for operates at the individual level and also at a systemic level where all signs can be viewed as constituting a broad cultural discourse as the participants of the culture attempt to make sense of their lives.

Man is, of course, a codifying animal. We get nowhere without having some sort of schemata for understanding our particular universes. Yet this truism in itself is banal. What excites our theoretical attention is a set of interlocking questions about the nature of codifying signs and the purposes such signs serve. We know that we do not go about randomly thinking about external realities. Rather, our world is modeled. In some cases that modeling is based on universal aspects of our human condition. Other aspects of our behavior flow from our cultural dispositions and the relationships generated by these conditions. In some cases our semantic dimensions seem to reflect the homogeneous qualities which characterize all cultures. In other cases our signs seem quite specific, speaking to and about localized domains of significance. At an intermediate level, both analytically and empirically, another set of sign procedures, neither local nor universal, emerges in such semiotic models as Islam. These larger sign systems must continually be scrutinized as they mutually implicate any particular cultural picture from a multitude of directions.

The two local Berber communities that we shall examine are not free of larger influences, whether they be part of Islam, or a generalized Mediterranean tradition, or an eddy in the world economy. The cultures of the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen are not autonomous. The Central Rif Mountains are prepossessing but not isolating, and their inhabitants traded with Phoenicians, became Muslims, were colonized by European powers, and are today dependent on world markets and sell their labor abroad. We do not pretend that these communities exist outside the larger world; quite the contrary, they are constantly buffeted by external forces as members of the community sell their labor in other parts of Morocco or elsewhere in the Maghreb and Europe. There is a myth, believed only by romantics and anthropologists, that parts of the world still consist of subsistence economies in isolated villages where business is conducted on a face-to-face basis. The Rifi, or at

least some of them, read the national Moroccan press and listen to the radio news. A few of them read *Le Monde*. Undoubtedly, some of them will read this monograph. But the fact that they participate in a larger economic and political entity than their own community does not mean that they do not possess their own distinctive culture. That culture is what we seek to explain and to make intelligible to our readers.

Such a task is not easy. The communities we have examined are made up of a multitude of voices: men and women of all ages, each with a clear identity, and all seeking to participate in the decision-making processes of the villages. The rose in our title is, of course, an allusion to women. The thorn is a dialectical conceit, provoked not only by a desire on our part for symmetry but by the contravening influences of women in this Muslim society. We have attempted to delineate not only the role of women but the involvement of all generations, parents and younger men and women, in the decisions, arguments, and alliances.

The rose as a metaphor for woman has been part of a Mediterranean literary tradition since the "Song of Songs," allowing poets to speak figuratively not only of women but also of love, marriage, and familial unity. We have utilized the metaphoric relationship of roses and thorns, apart from the obvious sexual symbolism of flower as female genitalia and thorn as phallus, as an indicator of the duality of Rifi structures of meaning. In examining the relationship between social, expressive, and cognitive aspects of the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen, we have noted that each sign system contains within itself contrasting potentials: one toward communal solidarity and contract, the other toward manipulation and self-interest. By focusing on a particular system of exchanges surrounding the marriage ceremony, the complimentarity of agonistic relationships and social solidarity can be observed as a central ingredient of culture in the Rif. The unity of Rifi life is constantly pricked by symbolic thorns.

We have restricted the boundaries of our analysis to two tribes in northern Morocco, and we have concentrated on political, economic, ritual, poetic, and other aesthetic domains related to marriage. Marriage is a means of creating allies and identifying reciprocal relationships, and it can be expressed in ritual and myth; therefore, our analysis has allowed us to examine a number of different kinds of codes among the Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen. We have certainly not exhausted all the different domains of Rifi

cultural experience. We hope, however, to extract certain principles by which Rifi codes are constituted and messages exchanged. In part, these messages arise from the contingencies of everyday life in an often hostile environment. At the same time, the local semiotic system of the Rifi Berbers is embedded in a larger one, that of Islam, with its own cosmological consequences and legal-moral system. Indeed, it is often difficult to separate the two and distinguish that which is local from pan-Islamic or at least North African configurations.

Of course, any separation between an Islamic code and a local code would appear artificial to most Rifi, who discover in the design of their own lives the larger purposes of God. The boundary between a master code such as Islam and an idiolect such as local Rifi practices is largely an analytic construct. Such distinctions are legitimate as a means of contrasting major traditions and their essentialist descriptions from local experience, but abstractions rarely inform the actors in specific circumstances. One of the best attempts to wed Islam with the polymorphous variations of a specific Moroccan culture has been Berque's analysis of the Moroccan High Atlas (1955), one of the first implicitly semiotic investigations of Middle Eastern culture. Since the publication of that work, the number of semiotic treatments has increased exponentially. These treatments have been reviewed by Fernea and Malarkey (1975), as well as by R. Joseph (1980a, b). Specific semiotic studies have been carried out in Morocco by C. Geertz (1968, 1972, 1976a, b, 1979, 1983) and for neighboring Algeria by Bourdieu (1962, 1965, 1972, 1977, 1978, 1980). More recently, Berque has attempted to establish a semiotic framework for understanding urban Arab society and its aesthetic and cognitive expression (1978 and 1983), and H. Geertz has applied semiotic techniques to the study of Sefrou (1980). Applying Derridian concepts of deconstruction, Meeker has analyzed north Arabian poetry (1979), and R. Joseph has examined the semiotics of the Islamic mosque (1981). Izutsu (1964), and Malti-Douglas (1980) have all used fairly implicit semiotic techniques in examining various aspects of Islam, and many more scholars have, of necessity, attempted to decipher Middle Eastern codes of signification using a variety of techniques.

To comprehend Islam, one is, in fact, obliged to study signs; the system is a constant set of signifiers of correct moral, legal, and political behavior in a multitude of contexts. Islam, not only as an

abstraction but as a social world, is constituted by signs, acted, spoken, written, built. Whether the signs stem from the Qu'ran, rituals, dreams, the structure of the arabesque, poetry, or legal contracts, people interact according to their readings of this semiotic system. Islam is totalizing, covering all aspects of behavior, including the marriage ceremony. As we examine Rifi ceremonies, students of other Islamic cultures will undoubtedly note cultural similarities, features of the local domain that are shared in a broader semiotic context throughout the Islamic world. Other aspects may appear familiar not because they stem from Islam but rather from the impingement of the world economic system and its emphasis on cash as the marker of significance. Finally, however, there is a core of significance that emerges from local experience. Our concerns are not primarily to isolate which ingredients of the tribes examined are autochthonous and which are implanted; rather, we want to examine how the various parts articulate with one another.

Clearly, a significant body of ethnographic work has already preceded us. The Rif was the scene for one of the pioneer ethnographies in American anthropology (Coon, 1931). The region has since received extensive treatment in a number of articles by Hart, culminating in his general ethnography (1976). More recently, Seddon (1981) has written on the penetration of world economy and the structural consequences of capital formation among the Berbers of the eastern Rif. Jamous (1981) has examined the importance of honor and *baraka* among the Iqar'iyen, again in the eastern Rif. Morocco, in general, has probably become the single most important region in the Middle East for both Anglo-American and French ethnography. Significant monographs have been produced by Brown (1976); Burke (1976); Chiapuris (1977); Crapanzano (1973, 1980); Davis (1983); D. Dwyer (1978); K. Dwyer (1982); Dunn (1977); Eickelman (1976, 1985); E. Fernea (1976); Geertz, Geertz, and Rosen (1979); Gellner (1969, but see also 1973 and 1981); Kilborne (1978); Mernissi (1975); Munson (1984); Rabinow (1975 and 1977); Rassam (1974); and Rosen (1985). These monographs, as well as numerous articles and dissertations, have been reviewed by R. Joseph (n.d.). The orientation of these works has varied widely; those influenced by Gellner have tended toward institutional analysis and social organization; those following Clifford Geertz have been more "symbolic," laying greater stress on cultural phenom-

ena. Others have drawn more closely on ecological or techno-environmental paradigms, influenced to a certain extent by Geertz but also by the University of Michigan program. Some of the French ethnographers have worked in the structuralist mode (reviewed in Fernea and Malarkey, 1975); others in the Marxist tradition (cf. Seddon). Most of these approaches, with the possible exception of structuralism, have shared a commitment to diachronic analysis. Morocco, like every other corner of the world today, has been a terrain over which anthropologists have pursued a broad array of theoretical fashions.

A few scholars have transcended the ethnographic context of their research on Morocco and have influenced theory in general. The most important figures are probably Gellner and Geertz. Both men have located critical elements in Moroccan culture. Gellner has generally seen relationships as directed toward emphasizing social solidarity, whereas Geertz has tended to stress the agonistic elements in Moroccan social relationships. Followers of the two have shown fidelity to one approach or the other, although the oppositional character of the two positions is largely artificial. Individual competitiveness on the one hand and contractual solidarity on the other can be regarded as complementary features of the same system.

The other major theoretical force to emerge out of North African studies is Bourdieu, who has studied Kabyle Berbers in Algeria. Bourdieu's initial work, *The Algerians* (1962), was a fairly straightforward Durkheimian study of social institutions. In an extraordinary series of works that followed, including *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Pratique* (1972), *Algérie 60* (1977), *Le Sens Pratique* (1980), and articles published in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales,* a journal he directs, Bourdieu has elevated his theoretical concerns to a primary position within the human sciences. He argues it is not enough simply to study signs, central though they are to cultural discourse; one must also understand how signs are used. While acknowledging a certain structuration of cultural universes, Bourdieu goes beyond formalism to a world of consciousness and purposefulness in which humans have volition and a particular history. Among the Kabyles the gift and countergift do not operate from an unconscious model but rather from one in which "the agents must not be entirely unaware of the truth (meaning) of their exchanges" (1977:7). In Bourdieu's model, communication remains

supreme, but it operates in a context of contingencies, volition, intentionality, and time. His model of reciprocity is one based on strategy, probability, and experience. (For a general discussion of the theory of practices, see Ortner, 1984, pp. 144–57; for a specific discussion of Bourdieu's application, see R. Joseph, 1980a, b.)

Our own study has profited from the above ethnographies as well as from theoretical disputes provoked by Gellner, Geertz, Bourdieu, and others (for a discussion of the debate among the above, see Eickelman, 1984:279–89). Intriguing as these theoretical stances have been, we have not evoked any of them. We have sought, because our field data so obliged us, to reconcile contrasting interpretations of Moroccan social structure and society; one which emphasizes collective solidarity based on kinship and a second which emphasizes the manipulative power of individuals. Both of these tendencies, individual manipulation and collective welfare, are in operation in the society at one time or another, and sometimes simultaneously.

Both the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen are divided into subunits based on imputed genealogical connections; these groupings provide mutual assistance and establish common identity. The aggregates of Rifi social organization have a continuity and regulate their own internal affairs and public polity. Individuals form obligations to one another as a result of their relationships, and Rifi conceptualize their world within a framework of ideological and practical cooperation. The community of shared interests is, however, imperfectly defined because its members belong to a number of different subsystems independent of genealogical reckoning, such as patron-client dyads and affinal networks, whose points of reference are individually centered. Any individual simultaneously belongs to a number of different kinds of associations.

Although Rifi society consists of a number of hierarchically organized aggregates to which members are recruited through agnatic relationships (e.g., lineages, clans, tribes), there are, at the same time, many relationships formed on an *ad hoc* basis in which rights and obligations are ill-defined and constantly shifting. For example, while every lineage has a chief (*amghar*), not every member of the lineage necessarily feels obliged to follow him, and some of his followers may belong to other lineages. There is thus a conditional quality to the nature of relationships which may often follow instrumental and practical inclinations. Although there is a tendency

toward social relations being determined by *a priori* structural differentiation, there is at the same time a high degree of elasticity in their structuring.

Every individual belongs to an aggregate which shapes his or her allegiances; at the same time, each person is autonomous and seeks to maximize options. Within the Rifi community, there is a blurring of the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft.* There is a notion of collective solidarity based upon kinship and communal interests, but this solidarity is brittle and must constantly be reinforced not only by verbal and written contracts but also by symbolic representations which reaffirm solidarity. Complementary to a collective accord is the potential for discord. Conjunctive with every contract is the potential for self-interest and atomistic manipulation. Every verbal agreement expresses conditionality by the addendum *n-shala,* if God so wills. Underlying contracts is the premise that certainty is controlled by God and not by humans. Implicated in each expression of solidarity is a recognition of the uncertainty of its achievement. Only when Rifi speak of God, the Qu'ran, or some aspect of life which transcends the community, is the agonistic quality submerged.

By characterizing relationships within the community as agonistic, we do not mean to imply that the Rifi community is antagonistic. Certainly there are deep enmities between individuals, as witnessed by blood vengeance. Agonistic relationships are, however, of a different order; obviously one can pursue self-interest even among friends, just as one can create alliances and solidarity with one's enemies. The competitive, combative nature of agonistic life simply implies that each individual is a contestant seeking advantage as best he or she can.

Every society has rules, but members of the society bend or break those rules. The problem of order and disorder has posed endless difficulties for anthropologists, some of whom have claimed to find societies disposed toward integration and social cohesion; others discover competition, conflict, even chaos. Occasionally, anthropologists examining the same society will come to radically different interpretations. Undoubtedly, discourse about other people has a good deal to do with the individual predispositions of its practitioners, as well as the *Zeitgeist* in which they work, and the political impulses, often unconscious, which all intellectuals serve. Such influences are not absent from our own work. We have tak-

en theoretical preoccupations unknown and unlikely to command much intellectual support among Rifi and imposed an order onto their experiences which are, after all, quite unlike our own. Yet our inquiry suggests that within each of the multitudinous Berber sign systems, there is a double coding toward *both* union and division. Each sign system is double-coded, and this form of dialectical coding is itself a redundant feature of Rifi cultural life. We do not believe that Rifi social behavior is a matter of momentary strategies contradicting an ideology of solidarity, nor do we contend that it is one of occasional moments of cohesion contradicting an agonistic ideology; rather the Rifi system of meaning is a coherent and logical whole transected by the oppositions of collectivity and individual assertiveness. The cultural discourse which takes place within the various subsystems of the society reiterates this opposition between unity and segmentation. Just as the natural world is filled with uncertainty and jeopardy, so is the social world; as nature can be beneficent yet also hostile, so one's relatives and neighbors can be potential allies or enemies. This double coding is expressed in alliance, ritual, economic exchanges, and aesthetic representations, as each domain within the society is interconnected in an overarching system of signification which allows the Rifi to apprehend their world.

When members of the Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen marry, they are not only establishing affinal relationships; they also establish and define categories of relationship such as bride, groom, in-laws, and the like; they participate in a rite of passage for individuals as well as the communal aggregate; they enact rituals which reinforce the interconnection between human and plant fertility; they define and elaborate male and female space and social, as well as sexual, intercourse; they reaffirm the relationship between humans and the spiritual world; and they provide the basis for reproduction. If we interpret Rifi marriage as a multilayered system of communication, we can discern within its various levels the interweaving of a double code which constitutes Rifi meaning. Rifi culture, as a whole, is a supra-language in which each subsystem encodes repetitiously the features of the larger system. The structure of one set of relationships is a redundant expression of a contiguous set of relationships.

This division of Rifi signs into a double code is obviously a simplification which fails to take into account external influences on

the culture. Sign systems are not autonomous; they are dependent on the human environment, which is in a constant state of flux. There are few cultures, and certainly the Rifi is not one of them, which are isolated from the broad influences which cross national and cultural boundaries. The Central Rif was once part of a colonial empire which ended only in 1956. Since that time the Rif has been more closely integrated into the national polity of Morocco than during any previous era. The culture of Morocco itself has changed amidst various international ideological clashes as well as continuing capitalistic penetration and Western cultural influences. Additionally, during the past twenty years, Moroccans in great numbers have traveled abroad, especially to Europe. The resulting cultural hybridization has had revolutionary effects on the dispositions of Rif culture. Sign systems are invested with meaning by the habitual customs of participants in a culture. When the interpreters of customs are in disagreement, the sign system itself undergoes modification; the meaning may be altered, attenuated, or dropped. The meaning of a sign in society is contingent on the interpretation of its senders and receivers at any given time and location. The social context is a continually shifting modifier.

As entrepreneurism, cash crops, wage labor, and migration have impinged upon Moroccan culture, new and often ill digested semiotic codes have emerged. There have been obvious benefits in the improvement of medical care and increased literacy; there have also been serious costs as men and women are left with the difficult task of reacting to new intellectual and emotional experiences. As Bourdieu points out, among the Kabyles in Algeria, the transformation from a pre-capitalistic to a market economy unhinged the foundations not only of social relationships but also of concepts such as time and space (1979). As he sees it, the "disenchantment" of the Kabyles began when their existence as a collective community was displaced by labor markets and the logic of contrived and manipulated futures.

The tragedy of imported semiotic systems can be illustrated in the relationship between fathers and sons in the matter of mate selection. Traditionally, Rifi fathers sought brides for their sons from other men who would then be their allies through affinal relations. On the other hand, sons often had definite ideas about whom they wished to marry; consequently, there was always potential conflict over mate selection. Although sons could not flatly reject a father's

selection, they had a certain amount of authority in the matter since they could always threaten to divorce the woman their father favored. Fathers, on the other hand, provided the capital outlay in dowry and ritual expenses necessary for a son to get married. With the advent of a labor market and a pattern of migration away from parental authority, sons began to ignore their fathers and to follow an independent and self-centered moral code. Men became not only entrepreneurs in their economic relations but also in their social relations. A society that balanced the needs of individual manipulation against collective welfare was displaced by an atomistic society. The participants of Rifi society had traditionally competed with one another as part of an agonistic code; increasingly, they were alienated from one another. At the time of our fieldwork the double code of solidarity and agonism was still in ascendancy, but the seeds for a "disenchantment" were clearly present.

To our eyes, the Rifi way of doing things may at times appear overly rigid and elegant; at other times, chaotic and crude. As we suggested at the beginning of this chapter, making sense of other people's experience is no easy task. The problem of translation has led some observers to suggest that the Rif is feudal; others see it as egalitarian. Of course, both those terms need definition. But even if we agreed on a minimal contrasting definition, what could we make of a culture which alternated with both styles and almost deliberately flaunted each in a systematic manner? So far, the cultural system has been able to survive, indeed thrive, on its dialectical oppositions. One tendency is continually kept in check by the constraining net of a countervening pattern. From the two counterpoints, the culture achieves a balance and maintains its integrity. But what now, with the introduction of new imported social and cultural elements? It is difficult to tell whether external influences will simply break a few of the surface rules or whether these changes will go to the very core of the culture. The question, while phrased in a local Rifi context, goes to a much more universal issue: whether the idea of particular cultures will survive in the face of the astonishing power of a world culture bent on making all lesser entities subservient to its master logic.

TWO

The Relationship of the Social and Natural Environments

SYSTEMS OF MEANING do not operate apart from a physical context; signs are dependent upon their location in the natural world. Although the linguistic and nonverbal models that people construct may, for analytic purposes, be separated from environment, human communication takes place within a physical landscape which holds its own implications for the modeling of information. Thus, every cognitive and expressive system is constituted by a relationship between the culturally devised signifiers and the segment of the environment that is relevant to those signs.

The physical environment of the Rif Mountains, the manner of accessibility, land use, crops, division of labor, land tenure and inheritance, water resources, technology, and the like have all contributed to the construction of a particular set of problems; in large measure the communication codes that Rifi society has evolved are means of solving those problems.

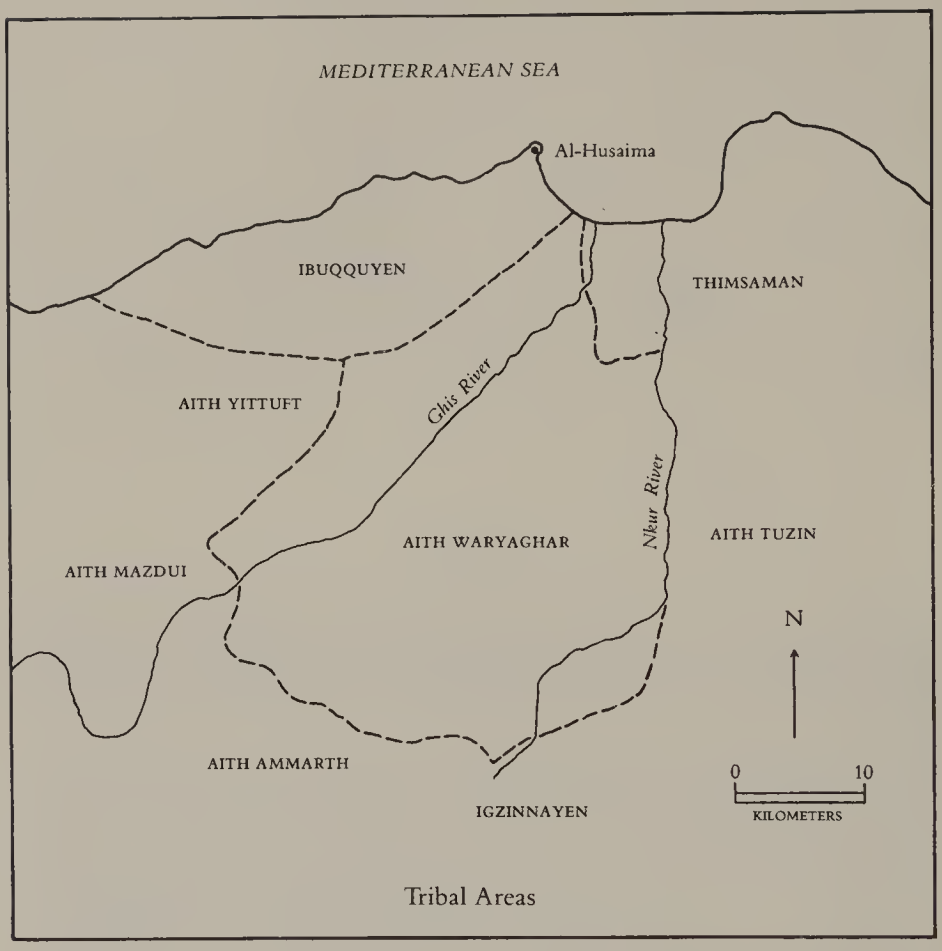
The most significant physical features of the region are the Rif Mountain chain and the Mediterranean coastline. The Rif is an extension of the mountainous chain of sedimentary and metamorphic rock stretching along the coastline from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Moulouya River which separates Morocco from Algeria (see map of Morocco). The Rifian slopes are steep, and travel through them is difficult. The original Arabic penetration skirted the Rif and entered the Moroccan plains through the Taza Corridor, a geological gap that separates the Rif and Atlas mountains. Not only have the mountains prevented easy access to the interior of Morocco,

Morocco

but the absence of ship shelter, except for the deltas of Wad Lao, Ghis, Nekor, and Bades, has further isolated the tribes of the region.

The Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen are two Berber tribes located in what is now the Province of Alhucemas (*Al-Husaima;* see map of tribal areas). The tribes speak Tarifit, a language related to the Zenatiya dialect of Berber. The population of the Ibuqquyen as of 1960 was 12,200 and of the Aith Waryaghar 75,988 (Moroccan census of 1960, quoted in Hart, 1976: 18). Figures from the Spanish census of 1929 give readings of 7,079 and 39,537 respectively (Otero, 1930; quoted in Hart, 1976: 17). Although it is difficult to assess the reliability of the earlier figures, they indicate that the population has almost doubled. The population density of the Ibuqquyen in 1960 was 50–59 people per square kilometer; the density of the Aith Waryaghar was 120 people per square kilometer (Comité National de Géographie du Maroc; quoted in Hart, 1976: 19). The effects of this population growth and density will be discussed further on.

Because of the impenetrability of the Rif Mountains and the ruggedness of the coastline, the Central Rif has been at the margins of Moroccan history. The Arabic etymology of the word *rif* itself (edge) suggests this marginality. The Berbers of Morocco are thought to be autochthonous, meaning simply that they were in North Africa before the Arabic invasion of the seventh century. The



earliest chronicles by al-Bakri in the eleventh century and 'Abd al-Haqq al-Badisi in the fourteenth century suggest that the Rifi had become Islamized, but it is doubtful they were incorporated into the Moroccan Sultanate. The history of Morocco has often been characterized as a division between the land under the central control of the Sultan (*bled-al-makhzen*) and the land outside of that control (*bled-as-siba*). The key diagnostic criterion for inclusion in the region of sultanate domination was whether the sultan or his representatives could collect taxes. Whether this distinction is useful in discussing Moroccan history is problematic, but it does seem probable that more often than not the tribes of the Central Rif were outside the effective control of a centralized regime and that politics and social control were matters adjudicated on the local level.

In the absence of a centralized political structure, juridical control

was precarious, built on tribal councils which existed at several different levels, including the local community, the clan, and the tribe. Theoretically, any adult male at any level could be a leader (*amghar* s.; *imgharen* pl.) of these councils, an inference which has led some scholars to characterize the political structure of the Rif as being one of egalitarianism. In fact, it is quite clear that some *imgharen* were more prominent than others, the differentiation criterion being the number of allies that an *amghar* could command in the process of imposing his will on others. The councils (*jma'th*) represented the centripetal and centrifugal tendencies in the Rif; although they were incipient corporate bodies which attempted to adjudicate collective well-being, they were also political platforms for demarking the individual interests of strong men. Hart (1976: 284) nicely illustrates their combative nature:

> Once in office, the tenure of an *amghar* was theoretically for life, but more often than not his life would be cut short by a bullet, or a dagger, or a billhook, or even poison in his tea: the competition for office was extremely fierce and of a markedly "dog-eat-dog" character.

Hart rightly corrects those writers who have characterized this system as either anarchy or democracy. Closer to the mark, the polity of the Central Rif, until the establishment of the protectorates by Spain and France, was extremely divided and few individuals were able to establish hegemony over any political unit larger than the local community.

Within the Central Rif, at least during those periods when there was an absence of external threat, the blood feud (*'adhawth*) was the predominant means of resolving disagreement between disputing parties. Feuds occurred amongst localized lineages (*dharfiqin*) within the local community or *dchar,* the clan or *ar-rba,* the tribe, or they could incorporate several tribes (cf. Hart, 1976: 313–38). During these feuds, which could be touched off by personal rivalry, arguments over land and water rights, inheritance, or honor, men chose up sides by joining together in alliances (*liff*). There has been an unfortunate tendency to gloss *liff* as moiety (cf. Montagne, 1930), but in fact the term more precisely stands simply for ally; in the songs sung by the Rifi girls it is often used as a simile for sweetheart. *Liff* alliances were in fact very fluid and temporary aggregations of individuals who opted in or out according to the exigencies

of the day and the quality of relationships they had with their allies. One of the most influential factors affecting the *liff* alliance structure was affinal relations created through marriage; thus, it is not surprising that young women sing of their *liff-ino* (my beloved) when they refer to their fiancés.

With the advent of the protectorates, which placed most of the Central Rif under the Spanish (the Igzinnayen fell under French domination), the local councils, their chiefs, and vengeance homicide were severely truncated. However, the causes of contention remained, and the mental landscape of agonistic disputation, balanced by a search for security and allies, continued to orient cultural dispositions. These dispositions generated a calculus which affected the physical landscape—the location of houses on bluffs, ridges, or hilltops from which they could be defended. Houses were built at least 300 meters from each other and often much farther, reflecting the Rifi suspiciousness even of members of the local community. Windows are still like slit holes which can serve the double purpose of ventilation and gun ports. Some of the older houses built before the twenties have feuding towers and pillboxes from which a family could combat raiders. Although no military reason for such structures remains, the architectonic notion of a house as a defensive fortress against a dangerous external world continues, as each house is surrounded by groves of prickly pear and inhospitable domestic dogs.

At the same time that the location of houses reflects the uncertainty, hostility, and jeopardy of Rifi life, their construction iterates the collective spirit. When a new house is to be built, the future owner calls upon his sons, kinsmen, and neighbors to aid him. After the house is completed, the owner sacrifices an animal and hosts a ceremony for the kinsmen and neighbors who have helped him (cf. Hart, 1976: 38). The paradox of aiding a man to build a fortress against his neighbors is resolved if we interpret both actions as part of a double coding of solidarity and agonism.

The uncertainty, hostility, and jeopardy of the social world are reinforced by the natural environment, where the Rifi have had to adapt to harsh and difficult conditions. Water supply is a constant problem: neither the Nekor (*Nkur*) nor the Ghis, the major rivers of the Central Rif, provides a dependable water supply, since both depend on a variable rainfall. Most of the cultivatable terrain in the Rif is not irrigated but is dry-farmed. Rainfall decreases from west to east along the Mediterranean coast, and, although the average

rainfall at Alhucemas is 315 mm or 12.4 inches (cf. Mikesell, 1961: 18), our records from the local weather station for the decade 1946–55 showed a range of 205 to 430 mm or 8.5 to 16.9 inches (R. Joseph, 1967: 6). Except for the rare stretches of irrigated terrain along rivers, the Rif is dry-farmed. Much of the Central Rif is, in fact, not under cultivation because the water supply is inadequate. The allocation of water along irrigation ditches is often a matter of dispute because it is necessary to work out agreements with each property owner over whose land the water flows. Irrigation is both a matter of cooperation and a cause for bitter quarrels and, in the past, of blood feuds.

Water shapes human relationships by its crucial role in the germination of crops and in the allocation of rights to its use, but it also is an important feature in the cosmology of the Rifi. Most sacred sites such as saints' tombs are located near springs or wells. One of the archetypic ways that a saint proves his *baraka* in Moroccan legend is to lead people to a water supply. The fact that sacred sites are often surrounded by groves of trees or tall shrubs has mistakenly led some commentators to assume that Moroccans venerate sacred woods; more likely, the woods and the sacred site have been determined by the contiguity of a reasonable supply of water, which, in a land of limited and irregular rainfall, takes on important adaptive value. There is a certain parallelism to this interpretation because water sites such as drains, dirty pools, and other bodies of stagnant water are associated with *jnun,* the malicious, supernatural beings which create mischief among the Rifi. As the association of saintly spirits is to benevolent water, so evil spirits seem to be associated with useless and even dangerous water. Since the place of *jnun* is also the breeding ground of mosquitoes and of the malaria fever which still kills many Rifi, the association is presumably not accidental.

The quest for water also occasions one of the most important rituals in the Central Rif, the "bride of the rain" ceremony, discussed in chapters five and six. While families within the local community will fight one another over water that is already on the ground, the ceremony to bring rainfall is a ritual around which the entire community coalesces. Men's relationships to one another are often uncertain and always conditional. On the other hand, men's relationship with God is never characterized by agonistic tendencies. Because rain and hence prosperity are indivisible, all Rifi equally share in this prosperity and, though they may attempt to

best one another in ordinary matters, they coalesce in the face of collective jeopardy.

Despite the hazards of a rugged terrain and uncertain precipitation, the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen carve out a subsistence from their land with the use of a simple technology and draft animals. The primary and most essential food stuff is barley, which is grown in the areas not supplied by irrigation (*dhamurth nj-bur*), as opposed to the more reduced areas of irrigation and garden orchards (*dhamurth w-aman* or "land of water"). For the Rifi, the cultivation of barley represents the most important work task. In winter (from November to February), the ground is cleared of small rocks and the plowing and sowing commence. Garden crops and maize are planted in the spring, and harvesting and threshing of the grain occur between May and mid-August. This cycle is important because only after the harvest has been collected in August and before the autumn rains begin in October do marriages take place. The period of relative subsistence inactivity of late summer and early autumn is set aside for marriage. The wedding cycle not only corresponds to a time of diminution of agricultural tasks but occurs when the Rifi have accumulated the largest economic surplus of products that can be marketed for cash to pay dowries and purchase the necessary food for the festivals. It is also a time when the weather is still warm, allowing a wedding host to entertain large numbers of people outdoors for a period of days. The schedule of sacred ritual time is thus intimately tied to materialistic considerations.

The Rifi supplement their diet of barley bread with numerous other products including maize, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, garlic, squash, and peppers, as well as fruits and nuts, but barley remains the primary economic and symbolic item in their lives. By Rifi standards, men and women must marry in order to grow barley, without which life is impossible. The cultivation of barley, which occupies far more time than the vegetable or fruit gardens, signifies to both men and women the most honorable type of work: for men, ownership and labor on the land; for women, the care and feeding of a family. Both sexes are intimately involved in the cultivation of barley. Men plow the land and sow the seed; both men and women, in separate groups, reap the barley; and women bundle up the grain stalks and then carry them on their backs to the threshing floor. Men thresh the barley, and women sift and winnow it in sieves.

Women then grind the grain in hand querns and bake the bread in ovens they themselves build and for which they collect firewood as fuel. Thus, men turn land and seed into barley, which women transform into flour and then into bread. The symbolism of this transformation is very clearly recognized in the wedding ceremony, when the bride brings barley seed to her husband's house to scatter in the coming cycle of planting. The bride's transporting of barley is also a symbolic representation of the importance of human and plant fertility and of the need for both men and women to produce and reproduce. This symbolic interconnection is further reinforced in the "bride of the rain" ritual during which a bread shovel is dressed as a bride and "married" to the sky. The purpose of this ceremony is to cause the germination of barley crops through a marriage of the rain-producing sky and the vegetation-producing earth.

Although the Rifi are primarily agriculturalists, they also maintain small stocks of goats and sheep and a few cattle and fowl. Most families also keep a mule or donkey for transportation and to help with the plowing and threshing. Livestock is not only an important means of supplementing the cereals and vegetables by providing milk, butter, meat, and eggs but is also an important source of material wealth and social prestige. Animals serve as reserve capital on the hoof which can be converted into cash at the weekly market. Even more important is the ritual value of animals. While grain is vital for subsistence, animal sacrifice is an integral part of all ceremonial and ritual life in the Central Rif. There are no communal events and few rites of passage which are not accompanied by sacrifices (cf. R. Joseph, 1967: 21–85). The frequency of animal sacrifice has two important ecological ramifications. First, sacrifice keeps the size of the herds stable and prevents overgrazing and concomitant deforestation. Second, by linking consumption of meat to a communal event, Rifi are able to slaughter larger animals and immediately divide the meat among a large number of people. Families rarely eat meat outside ceremonial contexts, as they have no means of preserving the surplus. Meat is seldom consumed within the nuclear family except on ceremonial occasions; when such meat is consumed, it is purchased in small quantities at the weekly market. Thus, the ceremonial sacrifice of livestock at the wedding is one means of distributing meat throughout the local community. Collective cooperation in the distribution of meat is

further recognized in the custom of *uzi'ath,* whereby a member of the *dchar* sacrifices an animal and the leading members of the community are socially obliged to purchase portions of the meat. The *uzi'ath* sacrifice occurs when a man must thin out his herd, during times of drought, when an animal is about to die, and on the night of the new moon of the holy month of Ramadan (cf. Hart, 1976: 59).

Although one of the underlying potentialities in Rifi society is toward an instrumental individualism, this tendency is constantly balanced by one toward communal solidarity and self-effacement. A proverb among the Kabylia Berbers of Algeria may with equal justice be applied to the Rifi, ". . . Only the devil [*shit'an*] says 'I'" (Bourdieu, 1965: 210). The agonism of the Rif is not, however, one of entrepreneurial initiative motivated by financial profit; there are many customs such as *uzi'ath* sacrifice which act as a means of mutual support. To be sure, the Rif is no longer part of the *bled-as-siba* but increasingly part of a broader economic and political community, of world markets and capitalism. Insofar as individual Rifi participate in these broader phenomena, they become less attached to the semiotic codes which have, up to now, informed their behavior and belief.

The penetration of a capitalistic mode of production and of markets for goods and labor has affected two important economic institutions in the Central Rif, the market place (*suq*) and contractual labor or sharecropping (*dhashrixth*). A system of markets, held in various parts of the Rif on different days of the week, was an important feature of the area even before the establishment of the Protectorates. There is now a considerable literature on such markets (see Fogg, 1940; Benet, 1957; Geertz, 1979; Mikesell, 1958; R. Joseph, 1967: 86–108; Hart, 1976: 69–88). Traditionally, these markets satisfied a whole range of social needs alongside the exchange of goods. According to Montagne (1930: 249), the social functions of the *suq* were as important as the economic ones:

> Le montagnard ne se rend pas au "souq" uniquement pour acheter ou vendre, il y vient souvent aussi pour rencontrer ses amis, régler des contestations de terrain ou de pâturage, ou plus simplement encore pour connaître les nouvelles du jour.*

* "The peasants not only attend the market to buy and sell; they also meet their friends, settle disputes, or learn the latest news."

Bourrilly (1932: 216) also notes the market's importance:

> Non seulement économique main encore *politique,* de ces souks ruraux. Ces rendez-vous périodiques, que des liens d'hospitalité, tels que la *zettata* [a promise of safe passage and related to the sugar gift that initiates marriage negotiations; see chapter six], rendent plus forts, aboutissent forcément à une fusion plus ou moins complète des groupes qui fréquentent les marchés voisins.†

From the standpoint of members of the local community, the weekly market is a place of social interaction, although men buy and sell in the *suq* and seek the most favorable prices they can obtain. Markets are thus agonistic arenas, where participants haggle over prices; but, at least traditionally, they were also sites for the expression of communal solidarity. Because market day brought together not only members of the local *dchar* but larger groupings representing differing factions of the tribe or, potentially, representatives from the entire tribe, the market site also served as a place of council meetings where the business of the *jma'th* or council could be conducted. The day of the market was also a special day of peace during which feuding had to be suspended ("market day is a day of respect," *n-nhar suq ghars r-hurma*). To break the peace of the market brought immediate retaliation, not merely from one's enemies but from the tribal councils themselves (cf. Hart, 1970).

Markets also reflected a pattern of sexual separation: the most important markets, calculated on the number of participants and volume of exchange, were attended only by men; but a parallel set of markets existed exclusively for women (*r-swaq a-tmgharin*), especially on the border between two different tribes. Women's markets were on a much smaller scale than men's except in times of intratribal warfare when most trading and social discourse halted in the men's markets and switched over to the women's. Hart is not in sympathy with this interpretation because he believes that men's markets continued to operate even in times of widespread feuding and warfare (1976: 87). There are, however, two women's markets currently in operation at just such transition zones between tribes: the Aith Qamra Saturday market between the Ibuqquyen and the

† "Not only economic but also political. . . . These periodic meets, in which liens of hospitality such as the *zettata* are strongly enforced, forcefully lead to a more or less complete fusion of the groups that frequent the local markets."

Aith Waryaghar and the Tuesday Swani market between the Thimsaman and Aith Waryaghar. Hart sees the markets as another example of the extreme degree of sexual segregation of the Rif (Ibid: 88), but an alternative interpretation is that women have spheres of influence that are culturally valid and at certain times supersede male institutions. This latter interpretation is more consistent with a number of semiotic codes and institutions which we shall discuss in subsequent chapters.

The local markets were originally places where Rifi purchased small amounts of kerosene, tea, sugar, tobacco, meat, fish, herbalistic medicine, and magical spells, as well as selling such surpluses as they had to obtain cash for ritual expenses. Now, however, an ideology of profit has penetrated the Central Rif, encouraging some Rifi to become commercial entrepreneurs. This development has created a shift in production from subsistence toward cash crops, and a shift in the ideology which underlies exchange. Some local Rifi have opted out of an economy based on status and into one based on profits. On the surface, such a transition might appear reasonable for a society in which individuals pursue self-interest, but capitalism and the semiotic code that propels it are quite distinct from the double code of agonism and solidarity that characterizes the Rif. The contest of interests, the search for allies, the striking of the best possible bargain were traditionally matters of deep personal concern, motivated as often as not by an attempt to improve status, yet constantly kept in check by other mechanisms of status allocation such as communal responsibility and mutual aid. The capitalistic mode is not agonistic but atomistic and impersonal—an attempt to accumulate capital simply to make profits at the expense of other individuals. During our fieldwork most Rifi produced food for their own subsistence and to generate such cash as was needed to pay taxes to the government and to meet ceremonial expenses. A proportion of the population had commenced to produce some cash crops such as grapes for wine merchants or almonds for perfume manufacturers, but even this group balanced production between cash and subsistence. The specialists who had ceased generalized production and concentrated on cash crops were not only caught in the bind of being uninformed of world markets and price mechanisms, but they were increasingly alienated from the community. The only exception to this general rule was the *cannabis* (*kif*) producers in the Ketama region of the western Rif, who made enormous if illicit profits (cf. R. Joseph, 1975).

Another area in which capitalistic penetration has had an impact was in the marketing of labor. The selling of labor, like the selling of products in the *suq,* was always part of Rifi culture. However, such labor exchanges as existed were on a contractual basis (*dhashrixth*), the most common type being the *akhammas*. In this relationship a wealthier man would supply land and equipment to cultivate a certain crop and his client (*akhammas*) would supply the labor. At the end of the season the landowner received four-fifths of the harvest and the laborer received one-fifth (*khamsa* is the word for five). The *akhammas* relationship has been quite common, especially as the population grows while land-holdings become increasingly fragmented through inheritance, which subdivides plots into smaller and smaller units. The *akhammas* appears to come out poorly in the harvest division but, because contracts are limited to one year and a laborer is free to negotiate with another patron the following year, landowners usually add incentives such as old clothing and daily meals. The *akhammas* also provides his labor only during relatively short periods such as plowing and harvesting. The problem with this sort of labor contract is that one is always another's client. Increasingly, young men now migrate and enter the cash labor market.

Seasonal migration from the Rif toward western Algeria began as early as 1880 (Hart, 1976: 88). It continued in this direction until the Algerian frontier was closed in the mid 1950s, after the Rifian Liberation Army operating out of the Spanish Protectorate attacked French military posts in Morocco on October 1, 1955. Migration to Algeria opened up after Algerian independence in 1962 but closed again in 1963, owing to a border dispute between Morocco and Algeria, and remains closed. The Algerian period of migration caused few changes in the Rif other than infusing the area with much needed currency. The cultural differences between the Rif and western Algeria were not so noticeable as to affect the returning migrants. This condition changed when the direction of migration shifted to Western Europe. Hart records that about seven hundred laborers had migrated to Europe from Alhucemas Province in 1961 (1976: 93); by 1966 literally thousands of young Rifi had left for Europe and thousands more were preparing to leave. The pattern of migration also changed from one of seasonal work in Algeria to one of spending several years abroad in cultures which were completely alien to the Rif. Given the rapid population expansion we discussed earlier in this chapter, it is not at all surprising that so

many young men traveled to Europe. These migrants returned to the Rif not only with rather large amounts of cash by Rifi standards but with new values and a detachment from many aspects of the traditional semiotic codes. Whether this infusion of new values will supersede older ones remains to be seen, although, undeniably, new customs are in competition with older ones. The Rifi can no longer withstand the hostile human environment by building his house on a ridge. Today a hostile world of atomistic impersonality and indifference to the community resides within the house; *jnuns* of the West spread not malaria but alienation.

THREE

Social Organization and the Strategy of Marriage

ANY DISCUSSION of Moroccan social organization is encumbered with the question, "Which Morocco?" Morocco is not a homogenous entity but rather a complex mosaic of cultural groups, ecologies, and histories. Moreover, we are dealing with a political entity which partly took shape over 1,000 years ago. The concept of "tradition" in contemporary Morocco has only a special and limited significance. It is not easy to disentangle what appears to be tradition today from the innovation of some sixty years ago when the protectorates were created. Adding to our difficulty are different analytical levels and contrasting ideological assumptions in the works of Moroccanists. Each theory or level of discourse carries with it a unique set of consequences.

In this monograph we are limiting ourselves to the Central Rif. Our concerns are with events recorded in the field and the recollections that seem pertinent to this analysis. Thus, "tradition" has no greater time depth than the existence of the protectorate and the decade of independence following 1956. We have refrained from parenthesizing tradition throughout this study but suggest that the reader keep in mind that our use of the term is quite limited. Some social history is necessary; indeed, historical antecedents are vital to an understanding of social phenomena. The historical framework that we have imposed is limited, however, because we do not have the data to reconstruct the material pertinent to a historical discourse.

The problem of discussing our antecedents in Moroccan studies

is complicated since we are, at least on occasion, forced to disagree with certain of their interpretations. These disagreements are exclusively with the interpretations drawn from specific ethnographic data. The social facts of the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen do not necessarily hold true for even adjacent tribes, much less to conditions in the Atlas, the Sahara, or the urban centers of Morocco. When we have disagreed with other theoretical interpretations, we have done so from the point of view of whether those interpretations match our ethnographic material of the Central Rif.

Finally, we approach the problem of social organization from the standpoints of both sign analysis and social anthropology. Our theoretical comments apply to only one social phenomenon: marriage and its ritual and economic implications. Although our specific problem is limited, it allows us to pursue various adjacent realms of thought and action. Restricting ourselves to marriage prevents us from discussing the complete contours of social organization in the Central Rif but allows detailed examination of a single institution. Starting with this basis for inclusion, we have excluded numerous issues and problems. What we have lost in breadth, we hope we have compensated for in depth.

We will argue in this and following chapters that within the cultural life of the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen there is a double pull toward two dissimilar poles. One impulse is toward an *ad hoc,* individualizing, self-interested, agonistic direction, and the other is toward social unity, collectivism, alliance, and the submergence of the individual to communal interests. We do not argue that these poles are ones toward which individuals or aggregates oscillate from time to time at their convenience; rather, the two potentials exist simultaneously and are in constant dialectical interplay. Before we direct our attention to this condition, however, we want to examine some of the implications of this duality to the anthropological interpretation of Moroccan society.

In a very rough fashion, the study of Moroccan social organization may be divided into two approaches: one places emphasis on the collective aspects of Moroccan society; the other on the manipulative, fluid, and individualistic. The first of these approaches is loosely fashioned around the idea of segmentary lineage organization in which there is balanced opposition between discrete and bonded patrilineal corporate groups, which maintain social and political order. The other approach sees segmentation as an idiom

through which people express an idealization constantly subordinated to actual practices which have very little to do with a balanced opposition between groups defined on the basis of kin relationships. In both perspectives, power is diffused, in one case among segmentary patrilineages and in the other between individuals. While these two readings seem to be contradictory, there is no reason to think that both are not, at least partly, true; a people can have a kinship system that unifies them, while at the same time they can follow practices that subvert that unity.

The idea of segmentation has, at least in anthropology, been successfully applied to ethnographic data, especially in Africa, in the distinguished works of Evans-Pritchard, Fortes, and M. G. Smith. In brief outline, the approach focuses upon social relationships as they are determined by kin-based, corporate, territorially distinct aggregates, which stand in opposition to each other. Because social relationships are coterminous with family relationships, the same set of relationships binds the family into a total jural and political order.

The first ethnographer to apply the segmentary model to Moroccan society was the French anthropologist Robert Montagne. Drawing on Durkheimian ideas and working independently of the British structural-functionalists, he evolved a model of Berber social relationships based upon the relationship of corporate groups (1931; see also Seddon, 1973: xiii–xxxvii). Montagne, however, argued a "pendulum-swing" similar to Leach's model for the hill tribes of Burma, in which Berber society oscillated between this segmentary model and a more *ad hoc* one based upon patron-client relationships. The segmentary aspects of Montagne's model have oriented the work of numerous Moroccanists, most especially Gellner and Hart.

Determining the extent to which a segmentary model applies to Moroccan society is complicated by the difficulty of defining the constitution of internal order within the various segments of public life. Among the classic examples of segmentary society such as the Nuer or Tallensi, such order is identified by the nature of political action as organized by corporate groups. Such corporations are analytically constituted by their common identity, continuity of membership, perpetuity (based on a commonly held territory), and autonomy from other groups. The boundaries of such a corporation are regulated by kinship and marriage in such a way that no

one set of political ties overlaps another so as to cause a double allegiance. Following this viewpoint, Gellner (1969:42) argues that "from the viewpoint of any group, its composition can be specified without ambiguity, and without any danger of using criteria of membership which might cut across each other."

The idea of corporate, segmentary patrilineal descent groups delineating social relationships and serving as the organizing principle binding individuals to a jural and political order has, in the case of the Central Rif, been argued most forcefully by Hart in an extensive series of publications (1954, 1957, 1958, 1962, 1965, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1976). Because Hart's analysis is based upon one of the two tribes discussed here, the Aith Waryaghar, it is useful to examine it in some detail.

Central to Hart's position is that the attributes discovered by Evans-Pritchard in his study of the Nuer are transferable to the Aith Waryaghar, who, according to Hart, subdivided into smaller jural and familiar units (clans, lineages, and sub-lineages) which are genealogically linked. Between various units, at any specific structural level, is a principle of balance and opposition. Furthermore, political authority is diffuse (1972: 28). In themselves, these factors do not constitute a segmentary society as the term has traditionally been employed; the key diagnostic criterion is that these structural elements are the predominant mode of social articulation, around which matters of polity, religion, and economics are organized. Neither Hart nor Gellner assigns exclusivity to lineage segmentation as the only form of political organization or social articulation in rural Morocco; rather, they both argue that it is the most important one. As Gellner (1969: 66) notes in his discussion of social structure in the Atlas, "Alliances do take place and links are established in addition to the segmentary alignment, but these additions form no system."

Before the advent of the Spanish Protectorate, the largest unit of social identification in the Central Rif was the *dhaqbitch,* a Rifi term which is often glossed in Arabic as *qbila* and in English as "tribe." The term "Aith" (Aith = sons of) as in Aith Waryaghar, Aith Ammarth, and Aith Tuzin, suggests that these groupings have a common eponymous ancestor, although this nomenclature is not used in the case of the Ibuqquyen or Timsamen. Within the Central Rif people still identify themselves by reference to their *dhaqbitch,* although members of any single *dhaqbitch* do not claim common an-

cestry, nor does the tribe act in any corporate manner. The territorial boundaries of the tribes seem fairly fixed, but, at least during this century, there is no notion that land is held corporately by the *dhaqbitch* or any of its constituent parts. There is a degree of tribal solidarity when faced by outṣide menace, but this solidarity is by no means mechanical. The great resistance leader 'Abd Al-Krim, a member of one of the chiefly families of the Aith Waryaghar, could not raise his own tribe in opposition to the Spanish without first disposing of his enemies within the tribe itself. As Gellner (1973) has pointed out, it would be inaccurate to transpose the weak tribal linkage of today onto the substance of tribal organization in the past, a point with which we completely agree. On the other hand, one should not assume that, because solidarity is loosely articulated today, it was not weak in the past.

The next level of segmentation below the *dhaqbitch* is the *rba',* which Coon glosses as canton and Hart as clan. Again, at this level, there is no shared genealogical linking. Members of the various *rbu* (pl.) of the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen (with the exception of the *imrabdhen,* a special case of caste identification based upon putative descent from the Prophet Muhammed by way of the Moroccan Sultan Molay Idris) do not claim common ancestry. There is no particular territorial proprietorship boundary of the *rba',* since membership is scattered throughout the tribal area.

At the base of this structure is the *dharfiqth* or lineage and the families which constitute it: *ijujga* (pl.), *jajgu* (s). At the time of our fieldwork, individuals recognized an identity with specific *dharfiqth* but were unable to trace any degree of relatedness to other members unless they were also members of an individual's three or four generational extended family or *jajgu*. The *dharfiqth* consisted of an assortment of individuals with ties of loyalty and amity going off in multiple directions. No one member of a *dharfiqth* had categories of relationships exactly like all the others. Each individual stood at the center of his or her own network of alliances forged upon idiosyncratic contingencies, excluding the extended family where categories of relationships were stable. Beyond the *jajgu* no category of relationship automatically came into play either in collaboration with other categories or in opposition to them. Both men and women culled political, economic, and affective advantages as they could from all sorts of linkages, including uterine and agnatic kinsmen, affines, neighbors, clients, patrons, friends. In the case of the

Central Rif, patrilineal descent is but one form, by no means the most important, of establishing social order.

There is, of course, the danger that in countering claims to a segmentary lineage organization of corporate patrilineal descent groups, the argument is pushed to another extreme of purely atomistic behavior. It is true that patrilineal relatives supported one another more often than not and that any segmentary system has within it the seeds of disputation among units at all levels of pyramidal organization. Our disagreement with the position taken by Hart is partly a matter of degree. Certainly, when a kin aggregate has control over sizable resources—either in the form of land, prestige, or power—that group tends to maintain a higher level of common identification and solidarity. Hart (1976: 270) implicitly recognizes this point when he notes that the holy lineages have a deeper genealogy than poor or immigrant lineages. The stressing of genealogical depth and the attempt to close the boundaries of relatedness among privileged elites are common phenomena not only in Morocco but elsewhere in the Middle East (cf. Peters, 1972; Khuri, 1975).

But our disagreement is also on the technical ground that no lineage systems will have the Nuer-Tallensi characteristics if its marriage rules are based upon the principle of agamy. Although Hart has studied marriage among the Aith Waryaghar, his understanding of the rules behind mate selection appears to be heavily influenced by his notion of a patrilineal descent structure which predetermines the movement of women. According to Hart (1972: 37–38):

> The Moroccan tribal world was and is very definitely a man's world in which women took and take little or no part, at least on the surface. None the less, the division of labor by sex is very unequal: women work far harder and longer than men do; and in the realm of magic potions, poisons, etc., their influence is of course tremendous. In the social structure, women, handed around in marriage from one lineage to the next within a given clan, or more rarely, given to their agnatic cousins in their own lineages, or married into another clan or tribe, provided links of alliance in which they themselves being passive instruments of policy, had little or no choice or voice and these links were continuously reinforced through subsequent marriages.

By suggesting that the marriage rules among the Aith Waryaghar are patrifocally deterministic, Hart is able to give theoretical justification to his view of the segmentary nature of corporate descent groups in the Central Rif. Yet there is evidence that the pattern of mate selection he depicts is not only not true today but was not true in the late 1920s, when Coon investigated the region and discovered that parents attempted to marry their children off at a very young age before they became old enough to form preferences and strongly insist upon them. A number of studies on Morocco suggest that it is actually women who initiate marriages. As Mernissi (1975: 70) argues,

> Appearances emphasize the role of the father-in-law who is responsible for the negotiations concerning the bride-price and the execution of financial decisions entailed by the marriage contract, but the mother's role is pivotal because she has access to information relevant to the marriage that only women have in a sexually segregated society.

The question of who dominates whom in marriage decisions is a complex one; what seems to happen is that forceful individuals dominate over submissive ones, but there does not seem to be any systematic channeling of wives in one direction or another according to some *a priori* system of structural differentiation of the sort that is diagnostic of unilineal societies. Hart is probably correct when he contends that from a standpoint of Berber *ideology* there is an emphasis on the "absolute authority of a man over his wife" (1976: 218), but we believe he mistakes ideology for practice when he asserts (1976: 217) that women

> are provided or received in marriage, more or less around the generational network, among the constituent lineages of a given clan or subclan . . . they are passive instruments of policy, even political pawns, and . . . they serve to reinforce continually the lines in an ongoing chain of alliances.

Hart, whose corpus of fieldwork is clearly the outstanding ethnographic work on modern Northern Morocco, gives clear evidence that his theoretical biases are at odds with his recorded data. In his discussion of the *izran* or rhymed couplets sung by unmarried girls at weddings, he notes that "all these couplets have to do, in one way or another, with the subject of romantic love, which is just as

important in Morocco as anywhere in the Western world, although it may take rather different forms" (1976: 479). Hart's own evidence suggests that the *izran* are a potent tool for shaping opinion, a subject we will discuss in chapter five.

Affective attachment, however, is not the exclusive or even the most important element in the skewing of mating selections away from a pattern which would prevent the formation of discrete kinship units to manage the jural, political, and economic affairs of the tribes of the Central Rif. Of more significance is the fact that one acquires allies where one may, a principle that holds true not only for men but also for women. As Maher has noted in her study of social stratification in the Middle Atlas, both males and females compete for scarce resources and marriage becomes a means by which women enlarge their contacts and thus create political and economic networks. In the Middle Atlas, it is women who ". . . play the major part not only in choosing brides for their kinsmen and acquaintances, but in carrying out the marriage rituals" (1974: 163).

Both Gellner and Hart have demonstrated that, in certain realms of political action, genealogically determined corporate activity does take place; the issue remains whether such structured action is the most important element in the organization of political life. Each tribe in the Central Rif mountains has a sense of its own identity and a notion of territorial proprietorship; to belong to one tribe mutually excludes membership, although not necessarily land ownership, in another. In terms of concrete action, however, the responsibilities and obligations regulated by such membership are ambiguous. Although there have apparently been instances in which some, if not all, of the members of a tribe have exercised common action, it is by no means certain whether the exercise of corporate responsibility has been contingent on patrilineal genealogy. Moreover, the boundaries of group membership are permeable in the sense that men and women marry outside their natal *dhaqbitch* and thus establish conflicting sets of loyalties; a sense of corporate closure is also weakened by families grafting onto other tribes, clans, or lineages because of political expediency.

The *dhaqbitch* is further divided into a series of clanlike organizations, but again the degree of corporateness of such clans is unclear and they are apparently unstable. The clans, with one exception, do not hold common estate nor do they appear to exercise

common action to regulate their affairs. The exception to this general pattern are the *shurfa,* or holy clans, whose jural responsibilities and status are more formally fixed than other segmentary bodies.

Of course, other than on analytic grounds, there is no necessary reason for corporate groups to exist as unambiguous categories. But both analytically and empirically, what appears closer to the mark of organizational structure in the case of the Rif are imperfect corporations—entities that have certain aggregate identities but lack others. Agnatic corporate political unity among the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen coexists with other kinds of complex and elastic political bonds of network, community, friendship, and patronage, which set up differing sets of social spheres and loyalties, largely autonomous of kin-determined segmentary organization. The degree to which any individual identifies with a kinship unit (other than the immediate nuclear family) is often contingent upon the degree to which such an identification serves individual needs. This is not to suggest that agnatic identification is insignificant but rather that it is not exclusive. The tendency to pursue common corporate goals is undercut by an agonistic realism in practical affairs. Thus, Rosen has concluded that there are "virtually no corporate groups which can demand the undivided allegiance of their members in every social situation" (1972b: 227). Political actions, from this point of view, stem not from agnatic collectives but rather from individualistic concerns. Geertz argues that "Moroccan integration comes down to mediating relations among a field of competing individuals, each with a somewhat different basis of power and each scrambling to make his way within the general rules of the game by his own wit and resources" (1972: 37). The Morocco that Geertz and Rosen describe is one in which individuals negotiate social order amidst ambiguity in which each bond is distinctive and each person autonomous. The combativeness of Moroccan interpersonal relationships is, according to Geertz, "a constant testing of wills as individuals struggle to seize what they covet, defend what they have, and recover what they have lost" (1976a: 1493). Rather than viewing actions as stemming from collective responses to corporate pre-requisites, Geertz (1972: 37) discerns a passion

> for organizing everything in terms of the head-on encounter of individuals within a general, universalistic moral-legal

> code, which is used as a basis for forming contracts, arguing issues, deciding conflicts, maximizing options, and adjusting opportunistically to passing reality.

Geertz views both ideas and practices in Morocco as being part of a system of signification which encourages "pragmatic, adaptive, opportunistic, and generally *ad hoc* relationships" (1976b: 234) in a system which can be viewed as one of "mediating relations among a field of competing individuals, each with a somewhat different basis of power and each scrambling to make his way within the general rules of the game by his own wit and resources" (1972: 37).

Hildred Geertz's interpretation of Moroccan integration lays similar stress upon the uncertainty of familial alliance, the agonistic nature of relationships, and the general unsuitability of an application of segmentary models to Moroccan social structure. By insisting that family, friendship, and patronage are all of equal importance in organizing alliances among the people of Sefrou, she suggests the same sort of labile structure and optionality that is found in C. Geertz and Rosen (cf. H. Geertz, 1979: 315–17). Each individual stands at the apex of a personal group of allies creating "a ramifying thicket of ties in which no person is linked to anyone else in a simple, one-dimensional way" (1979: 327). Or as Rosen (1972b: 232) puts the point,

> the rights and duties binding two relatives are quite minimal and . . . there is a considerable range of ambiguity in all such inherent ties. . . . Each man forms a set of dyadic and contractual bonds which tend to be as distinctive and ephemeral as the individual who forms their locus.

Of course, one could argue that Sefrou, a community located in the foothills of the Middle Atlas Mountains and the location of the field study of Geertz, Geertz, and Rosen, is markedly different than other locales in Morocco. Notwithstanding local variation, it is odd that anthropologists find either that political and social organization is maintained by an inner genealogical composition characteristic of segmentary lineages or that genealogy does not, *in principle,* establish the organization of rights and duties and that association is pragmatic and voluntary. Given the fact that each side in the debate can bolster its arguments with extensive field data and theoretical sophistication, what factors might account for the seemingly diver-

sified accounts of Moroccan social organization and its attendant system of representations in beliefs and rituals?

One possible solution works equally well for either side of the issue. One can argue that at some time in the past the rural polity, outside the political domain of the centralized Sultanate or local lords, was guided by the principles of segmentary opposition of corporate descent groups. Over a period of time and for a variety of reasons, these groups were replaced by ego-centered clusters of allies, and agonistic personal alliances replaced the impersonal criteria of agnatic solidarity. The correspondence between descent groups and political and jural structures disappeared or at least became submerged in a system of fragmented loyalties and optionality. The virtue of this solution is that it replaces the question of *whether* kin-based corporate groups exist with the question of *when* did they exist? At the same time, it offers a partial explanation for the continued use of an indigenous *language* of segmentation even if the objective reality no longer seems to fit.

This solution, however, raises problems. First, there is the objective fact that the Central Rif was divided into entities, each one of which recognized a kind of internal genealogical division whether real or putative. While neither the *dhaqbitch,* the *rba'*, nor the *dharfiqth* appeared to be able to hark back to a common eponymous ancestor, the *jajgu* extended family certainly could. While none of the units at any level seemed to display the clear categorical differentiation that Evans-Pritchard described (1940: 144; see his diagram of political structure among the Nuer), this does not mean that agnatic ties and the organization of kin-based segments are not of considerable importance in the polity of the Central Rif. The fact that the *rba'* of the *imrabdhen* most closely conforms to a Nuer type of segmentary structure is instructive, especially since this group was especially looked up to by the laity who emulated the holy lineages in various ways. Given the fact that what marabouts did was considered, as Lévi-Strauss might put it, "good to think," it would be inconsistent if the laity did not utilize the lineage principle as a means of social articulation. Because only the "high" *imrabdhen* attempted to maintain lineage purity and preserve genealogy as a basic tenet of their social organization, even within that caste there was a structural differentiation over the value of maintaining kin-based corporate entities. The principle of agnatic solidarity seems to have worked best with the people on the top of the pecking order.

But unlike the Nuer aristocratic clan, the *diel,* who provided a model which everyone else seems to have followed and who thus created a political idiom for expressing all social ties through kinship, the *imrabdhen* were not able or did not want to create such a structural hegemony. Thus, for many other people, including the lower status *imrabdhen,* there were other competing principles of association including clientship, friendship, neighborliness, age, and so forth, each incorporating an individual into a multiple set of alliances. This optionality does not appear to be a recent phenomenon since Coon and Montagne both recognized the dialectic pulls of kin solidarity and individual manipulation over fifty years ago.

To a large extent the question of Moroccan rural social organization hinges upon the issue of mate selection. If we are to have unambiguous genealogical units capable of carrying out agnatic corporate action, patterns of marriage selection must be correspondingly unambiguous. If, on the other hand, social life is to be one of *ad hoc* self-interested, manipulative stratagems, then one must presume that such a pattern will be present in mating strategy. A third alternative is that the principles of atomistic and cohesive behavior operate coterminously, not as contradictions but rather as two collateral systems each with its own logic.

It has long been a commonplace in anthropology to divide marriage into two categories: either within certain specified boundaries (endogamy) or outside specified boundaries (exogamy). This bare statement oversimplifies the concerns that anthropologists have with the technical aspects of specific kinship systems, but it starkly depicts how the adult male tribesmen of the Central Rif visualize mate selection. It is around the question of endogamy and exogamy that most fathers calculate the value of a match for their sons and daughters. The issue of whom one's children marry is also an issue of alliances. Although allies are undoubtedly less crucial today than in the era of endemic blood feuding, marriage is still a means by which men consolidate their political positions by incorporating other men into an alliance system through the exchange of women.

The number of marriage alternatives is five. One can marry (1) a relative, either a parallel cousin or cross-cousin of one's own agnatic lineage; (2) a more distant relative within one's clan; (3) a nonrelative within the local community or *dchar;* (4) a nonrelative who is a member of one's own tribe but not of the local *dchar;* or, finally, (5) a member of another tribe. One may not marry any of the eigh-

teen categories of relatives specifically prohibited by the Qur'an and the Shari'a (see Hart, 1976: 217). The highest and lowest castes, i.e. prestigeful *imrabdhen* and low-caste occupational groups, tend toward caste endogamy. The remainder of the population follows a principle (or lack of one) of agamy, marrying in whatever direction is most beneficial, taking into account both affective and instrumental criteria.

Of the various possible alternatives in mate selection, cousin marriage and marriage outside the tribe appear to be the least frequent, although both occur. There is much literature on a preferred pattern of father's brother's daughter marriage in the Middle East, but our own data, as well as those of Hart (1976: 223–25), indicate that such marriage arrangements are rare except among the *imrabdhen* or holy lineages, where endogamy is an ideal pattern. Among the remaining segments of the population, such marriage is not only not preferred but is frowned upon. Hart's informants suggested that such marriages are more likely to end in divorce, and our informants believed that marriage to a cousin was not "normal" (see also Westermarck, 1914; Murphy, 1971; and H. Geertz, 1979). Intertribal marriage is also rare, although incidence is higher along tribal boundaries where two contiguous communities have social linkages. The potential for strife in such marriages and the absence of mediators tends to discourage this type of marriage; nonetheless, they occur.

Hart suggests that the most common marriage pattern is one of lineage exogamy coupled with clan endogamy. Our own data suggest that the most common pattern is *dchar* endogamy which may or may not be between members of the same *rba'* or clan. Since members of any one *rba'* are in no way able to trace descent to one another simply on the basis of *rba'* identification, marriage seems to be based more on locality than genealogy, and thus the *dchar* is a more useful unit within which to calculate marriage preferences.

The essential point, however, is that with the wide degree of optionality in marriage selection, the agnatic group is in no way a privileged recruitment entity. Relationships and hence rights and obligations go off in all sorts of directions undercutting the lineality of social organization. The Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen have neither practical nor ideological reasons to emphasize genealogical connections unless such connections serve some purpose. Because consanguineal and affinal linkages are only activated situationally,

genealogical histories are submerged in practical affairs and strategies of everyday life. Genealogical precision or even interest rarely extends beyond the *jajgu*. Political action rarely exceeds any lengthier genealogical span, and, whenever more inclusive units come into play, they are usually on the basis of territorial propinquity. In the main, alliances of marriage in the Central Rif come about through calculations that bring the maximum advantage to each party.

Because marriage patterns flow in a number of different directions, adult males have a wide repertoire of "causal explanations" or rationales for the kinds of marriages they seek to contract for their children. We have summarized some of these considerations elicited from informants. Readers will note that they tally with various other commentaries regarding Middle Eastern marriage (cf. Ayoub, 1959; Barth, 1973; Khuri, 1970; and others; for a review of this literature, see Fernea and Malarkey, 1975: 187–91).

Some of the reasons for an endogamous marriage are:

1. There are fewer arguments over which family is superior.
2. The groom's family is acquainted with the girl and has an idea of what sort of a person she is.
3. Property arrangements are simpler.
4. The groom's family knows the girl, and their affective ties reduce the potential for friction that could occur between the outsider and the other women of the household.
5. If an agnate of the family, the wife would be less likely to shame the family or bring its honor into question through inappropriate behavior or gossip.
6. If a man is fighting with his wife, their common relatives can pressure him into treating her better in order to maintain family solidarity.
7. As a corollary of (6), family unity decreases the possibility of divorce.

There are, however, a countervailing set of ends served by exogamy, which include:

1. Spreading one's contacts with alliance to a new set of affines may bring social and economic advantages.
2. Additional property may be brought under one's control by marriage to an outsider.
3. Ego's family has more power over his wife since she does not have any natural allies with the household.

None of these reasons, either in itself or in combination with others, is a sufficient explanation for a particular marriage. Since marriages are contracted both endogamously and exogamously, the "explanations" for one direction are offset by rationales in another direction. All that can be safely stated is that, when it comes time to marry a son or daughter, adult males recognize the variability of profits and losses, and this realization serves as one level of calculation.

While mate selection is, in many ways, an open system, there are some demographic, ethnic, and class restrictions, in addition to the obvious incest taboos, preventing marriage with certain categories of relatives. Girls usually get married between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Since most marriages are contracted within the local community or *dchar,* the availability of marriageable women is numerically restricted. If one takes the number of girls serving as *thiuziren* or dancing at the weddings in any one season as a rough calculation of the total number of girls "on the marriage market," there are rarely more than twenty females available for marriage in any one year in a reasonably good sized *dchar.* The smaller the local community, the smaller the total pool. The pool is theoretically further restricted by the possibility of a senior male taking a second or third wife, although polygamy is rare. Of course, if one seeks a marriage partner beyond the local community, the number of possible candidates expands. On the other hand, since marriage is rarely contracted between families who know nothing of one another, the possibilities for expansion are finite. The boundaries of religion block marriages between Rifi and Spanish or French, and ethnic and linguistic boundaries prevent marriage between Berbers and Arabs. In neither our data nor those of Hart (1976: 217–34) is there any significant indication of ethnic crossing in marriage, even in the port town of Alhucemas where the two groups work and live side by side.

In addition, there are caste-like prescriptions at both the top and bottom of the social scale. At the top are the *imrabdhen* or holy lineages, consisting of *shurfa,* or patrilineal descendants of the Prophet. This category is difficult to define, especially in ethnic terms. Since *shurfa* must definitionally be descendants of Mohammed, they must also be regarded as intrusive Arab families among the autochthonous Berbers. Membership, however, is not particularly clear-cut; what appears to be an ascriptive category is, more often than not, an achieved one. One becomes a *sharif* if one

is treated as such by others. A large and economically variegated group of people claims such descent, but these claims are accepted according to the degree that an individual or lineage can substantiate them on the basis of demeanor, property, judgment, blessedness, and honor. Many individuals make the claim but, like the Puritan theory of the elect, community opinion establishes whether the claimant will be legitimized. The *imrabdhen* are thus a mutable caste, partly based on ascriptive and partly on achieved status. The powerless, poor, or impure are, for all intents, dropped from the category, while the wealthy, powerful, and blessed can claim Sharifian ancestry, using these achievements to validate their claim.

Important members of the *imrabdhen* caste tend toward endogamy, although such families occasionally intermarry with the more prominent commoners. Marrying poorer commoners undermines a claim to Sharifian ancestry, although marriage to select commoners can enhance an *imrabdhen* family's social position and be used to legitimize a *sharif*'s claim to his status. The number of people who claim such status far exceeds the number who can substantiate it [Hart (1976: 465) estimates that only 10 percent are *baraka*-holders]. Claimants without the attributes of prosperity and power are ignored, and such individuals follow no perceptibly different pattern of mate preference from the rest of the population.

Another factor that mitigates against random choice is membership in various religious orders or Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqa*). There are a number of such associations in the Central Rif (Darqawa, 'Alawiyin, Tijaniyin, Wazzaniyin, Nasiriyin, 'Aisawa, and Karkriyin), although the adherents are a minority in the population. Because of the political ramifications of these orders, as well as the ridicule in which non-members often hold them, information about the religious brotherhoods is not easily obtainable. However, our data suggest that members of a *tariqa* prefer to marry within their own order, possibly for political reasons. Hart (1976: 200) cites the case of the grandson of the founder of the 'Alawiyin, an Algerian, who married a Rifian woman, presumably to attract more Rifian converts. Since each order has its own, often strenuous *tariqa* (path), endogamy presumably lessens tensions between brotherhood affines.

Another category which restricts the free movement of marriage partners is the *imazilen,* members of hereditary occupational groups. Various low-status occupations involving public exposure

and hence pollution, such as butchers, barbers, mule breeders, blacksmiths, criers, market weighers, musicians, and so forth, are attached to certain lineages, and there is a tendency for these individuals to marry endogamously. While marriage into the *shurfa* category elevates status, marriage into the *imazilen* lowers it. Marriage restrictions toward the *imazilen* are mainly symbolic rather than economic, since members of this caste may be relatively well-off by local economic standards.

Social class also influences the flow of mate selection. All other factors being equal, the more economically prosperous Berbers tend to marry among themselves. This pattern is, in part, a function of the reciprocity system of dowry exchange. A poor man would not have the financial resources to negotiate with a rich man, nor would he be able to fulfill subsequent obligations (cf. discussion in chapter six). Occasionally, alliances are contracted between the rich and the poor. The acephalous and fluid nature of Rifi political structure mitigates against rigid class structure, and there is a degree of flow between social boundaries. With the advent of cash wages and the possibility of accumulating capital, status distinctions based upon traditional criteria are dissolving. Some wealthier Berbers insist that these distinctions should be maintained, but others feel that if a young man has prospered on his own initiative and can afford the kinds of obligations necessary from a son-in-law, he would be an acceptable suitor. This acceptance may be a carryover from the days of the feuds when family fortunes and status ebbed and flowed.

The constraints upon marriage in the Central Rif are thus demographic and ethnic, and dependent on caste, religious association, or economic stratification. All these considerations channel marriage, but *none of them* is purely or even largely genealogical and none has the result of encapsulating a patrilineal descent group, fortifying its corporate boundaries, or privileging descent as the essential means of organizing the society. We observe an array of discriminatory considerations by which adult males make judgments concerning the utility of certain marriages. Furthermore, our discussion has been exclusively from the vantage point of the males contracting marriages, rather than from the viewpoint of the potential bride, groom, or their mothers. Most ceremonial and public aspects of marriage arrangements are conducted exclusively by adult males, from the preliminary ceremonial protocols through

the final exchange of dowry and ceremonial gift giving. The father of the potential groom approaches the father of the bride; these men negotiate dowry and formulate a contract. However, ignoring the other participants in the marriage contract makes analysis essentially incomplete. It is to these characters that we must now turn our attention.

The role of women in the social organization of Middle Eastern society is a complex one; in the ethnographic literature until recently females were depicted as only appendages to male society. The relationship between men and women was difficult to discern for a number of reasons: partly because Islam apparently subordinates females to males; partly because of presumed biases by male ethnographers; partly because of the inaccessibility of female informants to male ethnographers; and partly because female power structures are less public than male ones. Nelson points out, however, that there are neither theoretical nor empirical grounds for excluding women from the analysis of local Middle Eastern politics. She argues for a recognition of "the ongoing dialectical process of social life in which both men and women are involved in a reciprocity of influence *vis-à-vis* each other" (1974: 554). Recently, scores of books and articles have attempted to redress the imbalance of viewing the Middle East exclusively in male terms [this work is summarized in Beck and Keddie (1978); see especially articles on Morocco by Maher, Davis, Rosen, Dwyer].

Women exert their influence in a number of ways from such means as "the poison in the *tajin* [stew]" syndrome to their contributions of labor, their inheritance rights, their affective ties especially with sons, their magical powers, and their mediation among men. One of their most effective means of influence is through the informal power blocs they create. Among the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen, these blocs are similar to those created by males in that they coalesce around the personal ability of women to acquire allies through neighbors and friends as well as through their consanguineal and affinal relationships with other females. Affines are especially important; just as matrimonial linkage can be seen as a male device for acquiring allies, it is also the basic strategy by which women expand their relationships. The relationship between mother and daughter-in-law is not only of critical psychological importance (see Khuri, 1970), but it is a means by which a woman recruits a new set of female affinal allies.

The political milieu in which women exert influence possesses many of the features of the male political world, although it is not a mirror reflection. The major difference between the two kinds of political blocs is that, while men rise in political influence by obtaining influence from their fathers, women usually gain influence through their sons and in competition with their husbands. A young man's status is in large part a reflection of the status of his father; through his father, he acquires the necessary funding to get married and the land to till for his living. Until the relatively recent growth of a labor market, sons could only survive in this manner. Women, however, acquire very little power through either their fathers or their husbands. Although each daughter inherits a portion of her father's estate, her brothers usually exercise control over this land. Moreover, although a woman can wield considerable influence in her husband's house, her position is fragile because of the weighing of divorce laws in favor of the male. The relationship with males that women can best manage is with their own sons, with whom they develop closer affective relationships than they do with other males (H. Geertz, 1979: 332). A woman's influence is in part dependent upon her adult male children, and hence she is particularly concerned with whom they marry.

Female social status varies with age. The mechanism of sexual segregation and seclusion becomes significant in a girl's life when she enters her teens. Infants and pre-puberty children are not secluded from each other on sexual grounds. As the girls of the Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen grow older, segregation becomes more pronounced but work tasks often take girls outside of their homes, making it impossible for parents to supervise such seclusion. When a young woman marries, both her husband and her father share in responsibility for her honor, and her seclusion becomes more marked. Bearing children and the necessities of nursing and child care bind the married woman closely to home. As she grows older, however, she becomes less restricted in her physical mobility and increases her status by acquiring more contacts in the female subsociety. By the time she is thirty-five or forty years old, her eldest children are of marriageable age and can relieve her of many domestic chores. A woman of fifty will have built a considerable network of female allies and be actively engaged in broadening this circle. It is in this context that women ally themselves with their sons and become political counselors to them.

If women simply built their influence through their sons, the patrifocal emphasis in discussions of these societies would be confirmed; the sons simply serving as surrogates for other males such as fathers, husbands, and brothers. To be sure, all these men wield discretionary powers in decision making, often to the detriment of females. If an adult woman seeks to affect men and their attitudes, her sons are the channel over which she possesses the greatest control and scope for manipulation. But women acquire political influence not only through their sons but also, and of equal importance, through their linkage with other women. Each woman is the center of a political network of her own, consisting of her own consanguineal relatives, her affines, her friends and neighbors. These networks, which serve the passing of information, the sharing of goods and visits, acts of reciprocity and cooperation, expand and contract according to the personality of the woman. Women with strong networks are in a position to affect many aspects of the society, as Nelson (1974b: 558) summarized:

> Simultaneously, the woman as daughter, sister, wife and mother acts as an "information broker," mediating social relations within the family and larger society. The implications for power (reciprocity of influence) are obvious in that by these networks of relationships, the woman is in a position to channel or withhold information to male members of the kindred. And in this position the woman influences decision-making about alliances, actually sets up marriage relations, and informs male members of the household what is going on in other homes.

One of the key ways that a woman establishes her political domain within the community is by guiding and directing the marriage options of her sons and daughters. The impact of women on mate selection has been generally recognized but relegated to the matter of household decision in the "private" sector, rather than polity decision in the public sector. In many ways this dichotomy is unfortunate, for it suggests that marriages are not a part of general public polity. Since almost everyone who has commented on Middle Eastern marriage has noted the importance of mate selections as political strategies, it seems unreasonable to argue that men recruit allies through marriage and women merely concern themselves with whether they can continue to manage the household

with the addition of a daughter-in-law. Although it is true that most of the public rituals associated with marriage are dominated by males, it is equally true that women concern themselves with the selection of daughters-in-law (cf. R. Joseph, 1974 and 1976; H. Geertz, 1979: 370–71). Not only are mothers interested in the quality of their own relationships with a prospective daughter-in-law and with the affinal connections that such a marriage will create, but they are also concerned with their sons' well-being and their own influence over their sons. Young men are reserved and deferential around their fathers and rarely speak to them about personal matters. In matters of marriage preference, young men often utilize their mothers as a means of communicating their sentimental preferences. A mother is especially well placed in this society to influence the selection of a mate because she has access to other women through her personal political network and is in a position to know information about her son's potential bride that is unavailable to men. It is true that a young man's grandmother and sisters also have access to much of the same information, but they are less frequently used. A grandmother, especially one's father's mother, is a less reliable ally since she might side with her son rather than grandson; sisters are good at ascertaining another young girl's attitudes toward a boy but do not have nearly so much influence as mothers.

When a mother learns that her son is interested in a girl, she can become a powerful ally, especially if she already knows the girl (as is the case in *dchar* endogamy) and is favorably disposed toward her or her family. If she does not know the girl well, she will consult with her daughters and female allies. Her concerns will be only partly for the girl's character; she is also interested in the effect such a marriage will have on her own social network and the degree of opposition that her husband and other male relatives might raise. The factors that motivate a mother's support of a mate are in many ways similar to those of a father. Although there is literature to the contrary arguing that mothers look for daughters-in-law who will be faithful and well behaved and work hard, an argument that one of the present authors made in an earlier essay (R. Joseph, 1974), most women are dubious about *all* potential spouses for their sons. They are, however, interested in what kinds of affinal ties will be created with other women through the daughter-in-law. The major difference in the considerations of fathers and mothers is that fathers seek to dominate their sons in every arena including mate selection,

although older men often reminisce about how they tricked their own fathers into allowing them to marry a favorite girl. Mothers, on the other hand, seek to establish emotional debts which can be collected during the course of a son's rise in prestige and prosperity. This goal is undoubtedly attributable in part to an economic system where land, the chief source of income, remains in a man's possession until he dies, whereas women as they grow older are beholden to men and, in the case of widowhood, to sons. To assist a son in outwitting his father establishes a life-long debt at only a minimal cost to the mother.

There are several strategies by which women can manipulate their husbands in favor of a particular daughter-in-law. Given a pattern of *dchar* endogamy, there are not very many women in the marriage pool at any given time to choose from. Moreover, men know very little about the attributes of young women even within the local community. If a woman wishes to effect a marriage either because her son has urged her to aid him or for her own purposes, she merely reduces the size of the limited number of competing candidates. A father has but three links to the female communication network: his wife, mother, and sisters. His wife and mother are in especially advantageous positions to eliminate possible candidates by suggesting that a girl's family is unsuitable, that she has been poorly brought up, is lazy or bad-tempered, or has a shameful reputation in the community. Although men may not be motivated by the personal qualities of their son's spouses, they are concerned with the honor and reputation of their own families. It is thus a simple matter for women to supply intimate and damaging (as well as positive) information about potential mates to their detriment or advantage. While the men of the Central Rif are the custodians of honor, women are the molders of a person's reputation. In a society in which relationships are flexible, fluid, and often agonistic, women shape the direction and quality of those relationships.

Mate selection and hence the nature of political relationships (insofar as it is determined by kinship) are not simply a matter of clear-cut rules supporting patrilineal descent solidarity. Marriage arrangements are characterized by a high degree of optionality and negotiation between adult males and females. Reality is a matter of testing will and disposition, not only among males but also between men and women. An agonistic world of self-interest is not the exclusive property of males, but rather infuses the society of

both sexes. These features represent not only a sexual dialectic but also a generational one. The literature on the Middle East regards juveniles as insignificant elements in the general allocation of decision making, especially concerning their own marriages—in which young, unmarried men and women have little or no say. The degree to which juveniles participate in mate selection presumably varies from area to area; our analysis here is based exclusively upon the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen.

The influence young girls have on the selection of a mate consists of informal strategies as well as institutional arenas in which they can publicly announce for or against a suitor. Because most marriages occur within the *dchar,* young men and women have many opportunities to meet one another. Although the tribes of the Central Rif practice sexual segregation, the degree to which such practices are enforced varies with age and social status. Young children are not segregated at all, and adolescents constantly encounter one another in the pursuit of their chores; boys shepherd flocks and girls collect water, wash clothing, and gather firewood, all outside the supervision of adults. As Coon (1931: 132) points out, young unmarried boys and girls "have ample opportunity to become acquainted with each other and to form preferences for particular individuals of the opposite sex."

The question is not whether unmarried youngsters become intimate with each other, but the degree of such intimacy. Since the Berber settlement pattern is one of dispersed households, members of each family must travel daily to collect water. This task is exclusively a female activity and is usually carried out by unmarried girls. Each day they travel to and congregate around a water source; young males often travel in the same direction. As a girl moves along the pathway from her house to the water, she usually meets other female age mates occupied with the same task. The girls thus travel in clusters, often followed by small groups of boys who carefully maintain a distance between themselves and the females.

If a boy is interested in a particular girl and has been led to believe through his sister or other female relatives that the girl likes him, he will "walk her home." Since most houses are a good distance from the few sources of water, this walk may take anywhere from a half-hour to an hour-and-a-half. The young man never walks beside the girl but remains at a distance behind her, thus preserving the fiction that they are not together. It is entirely up to the girl

whether she wishes to encourage or discourage the young man because she controls the "social distance" separating the two.

Aside from the possibilities of daily encounters outside the house, *dchar* mates meet one another regularly at various prenuptial rituals as well as at the weddings themselves. Before each wedding the bride and groom select a group of six or seven age mates to accompany them as they travel to the various houses of the *dchar* collecting *ghrama,* the ritual gift each family makes to the new couple. Again, the young men and women do not travel together but are separated by a few hundred meters, a space which broadens and contracts as the groups approach or draw away from each house.

Each wedding ceremony is also a time when the young unmarried girls dance and sing before the male guests. When a girl starts to dance at the wedding ceremony, usually when she is fourteen years old, it is a public statement that she is eligible to be courted. Moreover, the dance motions and song lyrics are sexually explicit, announcing to the guests the sensuous appeal of each girl. The following two chapters will be devoted to a discussion of the institutional setting in which young, unmarried girls participate in courtship. Here we wish only to mention various strategems by which juveniles of both sexes participate in the general agonistic scheme that runs through tribal life in the Rif. Our conclusions are at odds with interpretations such as, "Young girls are in a similar but even more helpless position than young men. They do not fight against it [an arranged marriage] or resent it because there is little use" (H. Geertz, 1979: 369); or girls have "little input into the decision-making process" (D. Dwyer, 1978: 27). This disparity may reflect the difference between Moroccan towns (Sefrou and Taroudannt, respectively) and the countryside. Among the Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen, young women challenge the parental world and attempt to pursue their own, often oppositional, interests.

Young women pursue these interests through a complex of maneuvers including eliciting the aid of their mothers, aunts, and sisters, as well as appealing to their brothers or moving their fathers with threats of suicide. They also rely on a number of magical charms and the manipulation of witchcraft. The use of magic is a very potent weapon in a culture in which beliefs in the supernatural play a prominent role in daily life. Men often discuss their fears of the magical world and the disastrous consequences of such a chal-

lenge. The relationship between sexual potency and magic is clearly if inaccurately perceived, and barrenness or impotence is usually attributed to such factors. One such case is that of Haddu, who arranged for his son to marry a girl who opposed the match. According to Haddu, the girl visited a witch (*dhazubrith*) and obtained a spell (*suhur*) which made his son impotent. Even though the marriage took place, the son was unable, as Haddu put it, to "become stiff." After acquiring various counter charms from a *fqih* to no avail, Haddu finally agreed to dissolve the marriage. Presumably, Haddu's son's impotence did not stem from the efficacy of the spell, except in possibly a psychological sense. The fact is that such magic or the fear of it can be used to manipulate the social order either by preventing a marriage or quickly dissolving an unsatisfactory match.

The manner in which a young woman can manipulate mate selection is further illustrated by the case of Aliya. Aliya's father, a poor tenant farmer who claimed *shurfa* ancestry, sought to bolster this claim by arranging for Aliya to marry her parallel cousin, Muhammadi. Aliya did not like this fellow, and she persuaded her father to renege on his agreement with Muhammadi's father. Although the two fathers were, in this case, in agreement, Muhammadi's mother became quite furious, at least according to Aliya's sister who retold this story. Aliya's father then arranged a marriage for her with Driss, a boy from the same *dchar.* Because Muhammadi's mother was a relative, she was invited to the wedding where she surreptitiously cut off a piece of Aliya's wedding dress. By possessing the cloth, the aunt placed a spell upon Aliya, which made Aliya hate her new husband, Driss. Aliya was unable, because of the hex, to have intercourse with Driss, and, when her parents visited her for the seventh-day celebration after the wedding, she was still a virgin. Shortly afterwards she returned to her father's home explaining that a spell had been placed on her by the aunt. Her father took her to a magician who claimed he could break the spell for 250 dirhams. Neither the father nor Driss had enough money to effect the cure. The marriage was dissolved with Driss taking back some jewelry he had purchased for Aliya, but not the *sdhaq,* which had been spent on various items of her trousseau.

Among the various meanings of this tale is that men, in this case Aliya's father, Muhammadi, and Driss, can be put to disadvantage by women (Aliya and the aunt). The point is that women are more

than "messages" to be sent out and received by men as expressions of social relationships. They may serve this function, but at the same time they are capable of emitting messages that establish and maintain social relationships. On the surface the two most interested parties in the proposed marriage between Aliya and Driss were Aliya herself and her aunt, a dispute in which Aliya was the winner. The attempted marriage with Driss cannot count as a true marriage since it was not consummated; the victor in this latter case is somewhat more ambiguous since we do not really know whether the aunt used witchcraft or whether Aliya used the accusation as a means of getting out of a marriage to Driss. In either case, the winner was a female over the males—an example of the difficulties of viewing the society as organized solely around a patrifocal principle of agnatic solidarity. However this rather ambiguous case is interpreted, it illustrates the agonistic relation between sexes and generations.

Our insistence on the role of the female juvenile in affecting marriage decisions is not to argue that relationships between parents or between sexes are problematic, although they often are. Rather, we argue that principles of opposition, manipulation, and agonism underlie all elements in the social organization of the Central Rif. These examples are important in their own right because they suggest how problematic it is to view local politics and alliance as expressions of patrilineality, male dominance, and segmentary lineages. Furthermore, we are not simply discussing the influence that women, as mothers, wives, or daughters, have in the matter of mate selection. Even after marriage women continue to take an active role in decisions, arguments, and alliances and thus produce a constant strain between agnatic groupings and all other kin- and non-kin-based sodalities.

Finally, we must mention juvenile males whose roles are defined either as potential groom or brother of the potential bride. Again, it has been a commonplace to regard male juveniles as marginal to the local polity, although brothers are sometimes given the lurid role of killers who avenge the honor of a family sullied by a wayward sister. The relationship between siblings is often strained both in childhood and between adult brother and sister, strains that begin in the open and warm relationship of fathers to their daughters as opposed to their sons and continue in quarrels over female inheritance. Hart (1976: 87) indicates that, if a woman loses her honor

she will be killed by her brothers or her husband. Again according to Hart (1976: 126), illegitimate children are strangled and "if an unmarried mother is found out by any of her agnates, she gets the same treatment as her unwanted child." However, in neither our own data nor in Hart's can a specific case of sororicide be detected. Presumably brothers are concerned with the chastity of their sisters, but whether such concern is based on wishing to protect the honor of the lineage is much less certain. Certainly there is a good deal of envy and jealousy in the Central Rif, but such feelings seem rarely to result in the commission of sororicide. Even an accusation of a sexual transgression can be turned against the accuser, as in the following song sung at a wedding in the Ibuqquyen:

Nanis eguma wutchma anrret a-hisen
Anri ahzezebo huma urensen.

The boys have challenged my brother, "It would be better to kill that wanton your sister."
Then let them kill me to silence their lying tongues.

In this verse a young girl recounts that some men have approached her brother and accused her of sexual immorality. In her song, she is able to proclaim publicly her innocence, thus reducing her accusers to ridicule. Another song in the same vein specifically mentions the function of female poetry to redress false accusations:

Suneth ezranino ashar riz-bubenik
Mirme gar thar-ruth wuh ah-wuth u wa sherenik.

Fill your eyes and heart with my songs
Tell my denouncer he lied.

Considering the explicit nature of many of the songs, one would be hard pressed to argue that fathers and brothers are quick to murder a girl who has violated sexual modesty. As Herzfeld has argued within the context of the Greek village, one should beware of too literalist a reading of the semantic domains of words such as honor and shame (Herzfeld, 1980). Although there has always been an interpretation that women cannot restrain themselves sexually and thus must be segregated (cf. Dwyer, Crapazano, and others), there is some evidence that this may be more an urban phenomenon, or alternatively, an expression of male ideology. Certainly the folk rhetoric contains a strong current in favor of chastity and against

sexual activity outside marriage. Virgins are prized, and they fetch a higher dowry. There is a virginity test, and successful completion of the test results in public rejoicing. But as we shall point out in a subsequent chapter, the test is often rigged, indicating that sexual relations do occur before marriage and can cause no great consternation. The fact that moral slippage can be accommodated is further evidence that the social organization is considerably labile.

The other male juvenile involved in a marriage is, of course, the groom himself. According to H. Geertz (1979: 369), the situation of such a male in the town of Sefrou "embodies in a frustrating and enraging way his entire subordination to his father, his powerlessness in a society that values personal autonomy and force." Geertz, quite rightly, sees the problem for a young man of balancing the obvious discriminatory power of a father with the underlying values of a community that stresses individual autonomy. A father's power is enhanced not only by the community's respect for age over youth but also by his control of the vital resources needed to pay for a wedding ceremony. Moreover, a man inherits land (and thus his means of livelihood) through his father, who can always disinherit a recalcitrant son. As we have already suggested, young men mobilize the efforts of their mothers to assist them in marriage negotiations.

We believe, however, that Geertz overstates the case. Although a resolute son is at a disadvantage in respect to the rhetoric of filial loyalty and obedience, he nevertheless has, by the same moral code, the power to dissolve his own marriage. Thus, while a father can force a son into a marriage, his son can just as easily get out of it by dissolving the marriage, as did 'Abdallah by insisting that his wife of one year was a witch. Since it is impossible to counter such a claim with factual evidence, 'Abdallah was able to get out of a marriage he had opposed in the first place and subsequently to marry the girl he originally desired. From the standpoint of alliance, it makes little sense for a man to force his son into a marriage which does not stand a good chance of succeeding. The logic by which a father attempts to create alliances is contradicted if his son, early in the game, gets a divorce. We are not suggesting that fathers do not play a dominant role but rather that their sons are not as powerless in the matter as has sometimes been suggested. As we shall examine in chapter six, with new labor opportunities arising

in the cash sector and land becoming a less valuable commodity, the control of fathers over sons has become even more problematic.

In this examination of the various elements and individuals who participate in matrimonial decisions, no clear-cut pattern of authority emerges. In the Central Rif rhetoric is weighted toward males and elders, but these rhetorical claims must be balanced by the capacity of a wide range of individuals and statuses that compete with one another. This competition reflects not only practices, which are often at odds with attitudes, but also structural dispositions, which operate not only in questions of mate selection but in a wide range of realms including ritual, myth, aesthetic expression, and economic exchange. These matters will be taken up in subsequent chapters. Here we would like to conclude with one final case to illustrate our point.

Hamadi, a man in his mid-thirties, had been married three times, but he was divorced from his first wife and his second wife had recently died. Hamadi wished to acquire a new wife, but his eldest son, Ali, had just turned fifteen. Although Ali's mother was dead, the boy's grandmother was pressuring Hamadi to arrange her grandson's marriage. Hamadi's problem was partly financial; he could not afford two marriages at the same time.

To complicate matters, Hamadi's current wife, Fatima, adamantly refused to live in the same house with a new wife and threatened to divorce him should he take another wife. This threat caused Hamadi a double problem. First, Fatima had inherited some land from her family which Hamadi used to grow various fruits and nuts to sell in the market for cash. Fatima's brothers, on hearing of Hamadi's plans, told him that, if he and Fatima were divorced, the brothers would reclaim the land in their sister's name. Hamadi also wished to build a mill on Fatima's land, and this project was immediately challenged. To be on the safe side, Fatima also took from her house the jewelry she had inherited, moving it to her brother's home.

Hamadi's problems were not only financial. Fatima had borne him twin daughters who were about 14 months old at the time. Since twins are regarded as a fortunate sign of the possession of *baraka,* by divorcing his wife Hamadi would have been publicly disassociated from that *baraka*. Moreover, one of the few unambiguous signs of a social weighting toward patrilineality is the fact that children remain members of their father's *jajgu*. Thus, although Fa-

tima upon divorce would have returned to her natal household, her children would have remained in Hamadi's lineage. The one exception to this rule, at least physically, is if the children are being suckled, which was true in the case of the twins. Although the twins would still be members of his lineage, Hamadi would have had to live without them for as much as two years (for parallel data, see Hart, 1976: 143 and 218). To add to Hamadi's woes, Fatima announced that, if Hamadi divorced her, she would march bare-chested to the weekly market, a threat which seemed hyperbolic but which left him badly shaken. Moreover, one of Fatima's brothers had married Hamadi's cousin, and this brother announced that, if there was to be bad blood between the two families, he would divorce his wife. This threat further enlarged the circle of interested bystanders and brought Hamadi difficulties with his own agnatic kinsmen.

While Hamadi was fighting a tangled web of counter-interests with affines and agnates on one front, his mother was pursuing her own policy on another. Hamadi's mother wished to see her grandson Ali married as soon as possible because she had greater control over him than she did over the next eldest boy, who was Fatima's son. She reasoned that once Ali was married and had children himself, he would be in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* the other boy in maintaining effective control over Hamadi's estate. Hamadi's mother generally opposed Fatima on almost every issue; in this case, however, they were in essential agreement that Hamadi should not get married again, although for totally different reasons. Hamadi's mother opposed the wedding because she correctly assumed that, if Hamadi got married, Ali would have to wait several more years before Hamadi could afford to pay dowry to his son's bride. The natural alliance between mother and son was cleaved, in this case, by the mother's taking a political interest in the marriage of her grandson.

Hamadi's strategy in all these machinations had been relatively simple; he merely wished to exercise the right of polygyny while remaining married to Fatima. What is interesting about this case is that it illuminates both the agonistic play of events in the Central Rif and the recourse to the political solidarity of Fatima's patrilineage, as well as the question of lineage membership of the twins. It illustrates that the lineage is something more than an ideological reservoir and that agnatic groupings are brought into play when

and if they serve useful purposes. The matter resolved itself, incidentally, by Hamadi deferring his own marriage project. As he ironically put it, "Women are to be gotten around, but I guess I won't get around these."

In this chapter we have traversed the social landscape without resolving the differences in interpretation between those Moroccanists who advocate that lineage organization represents an instrument of political mobilization and those who see it as an expressive idiom. Encountering as many thorns as roses, it may appear that we have not gotten much beyond the beginning in our analysis.

This seeming lack of progress is due to the question of polity and social organization having been incorrectly framed. Instead of an either-or debate, it would be much more useful to consider the possibility that both a collective mode and an individuated mode of social articulation exist simultaneously. The dispute, on the whole, has not centered around the question of segmentation—for both sides agree that political action is diffuse. Rather, it has centered on the question of whether such segmentation is patrilineally organized or rests, instead, upon a multitude of ties which cut across agnatic lineage structure. In terms of tribal society in the Central Rif Mountains, both possibilities seem probable, at least in the sense that there is a wide range of means for constituting social identity and that no single form of organization delimits or excludes another.

When one examines Rifi ideology, the complexities become even more pronounced. In an attempt to demonstrate a homologous isomorphism between the political infrastructure and a moral ontology, the Moroccanists have argued for either *ad hoc* individualism or a form of agnatic collectivism. Neither of these characterizations makes much sense in the context of fatalism as viewed by Rifi society.

An examination of how a society deals with the issue of fatalism is, of course, one of primary means of apprehending not only people's ontological landscape but also where they locate political responsibility. If one is resigned to the will of God or hopeless in the face of preordained destiny, political action becomes arbitrary and theologically pointless. In our Rifi discussion of destiny, the issues that have plagued Moroccanists quickly come to the fore.

According to local interpretations, the Koran was a mixture of predestination and free will. Almost everyone was in agreement that the universe was guided by a single supreme entity (Allah). At the same time, most Rifi believed that each man is judged by his action and hence is free and morally responsible. On purely technical terms the debate among the Rifi can be reduced to the following issues: Allah is the sole dispenser of all action and the conditioner of human will; yet, alternatively, man cannot be excused from incorrectly interpreting the will of God. People may want to respond to the correct path selected by God's will, but their ways are mortal, arbitrary, and capable of error. As we discussed the meaning of *n'shala* (destiny is in the hands of God), the dialectic between collectivity, cohesion, and a unity with one's fellows as with God was opposed to individualism, friction, and agonistic behavior. This differentiation emerged at the semantic level, the ideological level, and, ultimately, the political level.

The expression *n'shala* is semantically interesting because it conveys a double message. The speaker qualifies all of his promises with the contingency that they will be fulfilled "if God so wants it." Thus, the message conveys the idea that "I will completely fulfill what I have promised to do unless divine providence intercedes." On the other hand, the expression is always used in anticipation of an event and is semantically suggestive that, if things don't work out, "I am not to blame." There is thus in the same term both a commitment and a withdrawal of a commitment. The speaker agrees that, of his own accord, he will promise to undertake some act, presumably for the benefit of both sides (the speaker and his listener); yet at the same time the speaker notationally insists that factors may intervene in his accomplishing the thing that he has agreed to undertake. The idiom of *n'shala* serves as a kind of ontological footnote for every collective endeavor. It has nothing to do with fatalism; rather, it has to do with the twin prongs of societal or individualistic action. Its semiotic significance is not to convey an ethos of resignation but rather to delineate the interplay of collective and agonistic interests.

The question of what Allah had in mind for them was of considerably more interest to most Rifi than discovering how a lineage model did or did not work. What did occupy their interest was the way that the social, natural, and cosmological worlds "played" into each other. This interest did not mean that they were unaware of

formal models (in fact, they understood them quite well); rather, it suggested that the "refractions" that interested and provoked their imagination were contingency models, based upon a reflexive grasp of the jeopardies inherent in their notion of the world of humans, nature, and spirits.

In the Rifi world of people, plants, animals, and supernatural entities, everything is constantly in hazard. Both social actions and symbolic representations attempt to mediate the gulf between safety and danger. In the gulf between harmony and danger, individual acts potentially place in jeopardy the accord between people, nature, and spirits. In such a state, men coalesce around unitary acts and expressions. Yet, at the same time, actions which apparently pose no danger to the common cause are channeled by a plurality of choices and divisions. Neither of these possibilities transcends or eclipses the other; they both exist within a theoretical parabolic which is encompassed by the larger ideology whereby structures and practices are constantly balanced and weighed.

There is, of course, nothing in this discussion of segmentation of a specific semiotic nature. The confluence of social anthropology and semiotics is in the interpretive model utilized by the ethnographer, which insists that congruent systems of meanings are in some ways related to one another. Thus, political intercourse, in terms of marriage and alliance, is viewed as part of a larger interpreting system of meaning (cf. Herzfeld, 1981).

Obviously, one of the consequences of extrapolating strictly political and organizational phenomena onto the semiotic framework is that the political phenomena lose their analytic autonomy, becoming merged in the context of meaning and how it is constituted. What is political and what is not political becomes submerged in a project of reading signs and the principles that such signs enumerate. Matters of polity become contextualized within this larger framework. In attempting to describe its contours, we shall shift our concerns from matters of social organization to those of ritual performance. As we expect to demonstrate in the following chapter, the organization of marriage ritual is semiotically consistent with those structures we have observed in mate selection.

FOUR

Systems of Representations

AS WE DISCOVERED at the conclusion of the previous chapter, there is always a potential for affairs to go awry during the wedding negotiations or at the wedding itself. The wedding is a system of ritual representations transforming the community and expressing an aesthetic and cognitive order. But the wedding ceremony is also a highly unstable "text," capable at any point of shifting its significance. As a rite of passage, the ceremony brings together not only the bride and groom and their families but also the *dchar* itself. The ceremony transforms relationships and unifies oppositions, but, at the same time, its participants are capable of causing mischief and disorder. The contractual aspects of the *dhamghra* may, at any moment, be undermined by manipulative agonistic discord.

The ceremony itself is an expression of solidarity among the participants and, as such, is part of the contractual basis of the society. But, as we have already noted, contracts are always conditional propositions around which individuals may be in disagreement. Implicated in every Rifi contract are self-interest, strategy, and manipulation. An exemplum of this conditionality, as we noted in the previous chapter, is the expression *n'shala*. Among the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen, as indeed among Moroccans in general and people elsewhere in the Middle East, contracts between two parties always evoke a third party. If *a* agrees to do something with or for *b*, he will condition his "performance" upon the active support of Allah. This conditionality of contract is verbally expressed by *n'shala*. Thus, a party enters a verbal agreement on the condition

that God "so wills it." Within the very nature of contractual solidarity, there is an uncertainty regarding its completion. Agreement within the community is never absolute. Tönnies's (1957) distinction between a community based upon kinship, common property, and communal interests, as opposed to one of individual interests in which juridical and economic relationships are all contingent upon contract, is an inadequate model for Morocco, where the two types freely intermingle. One would, in speaking about Rifi society, have to add a third element to Tönnies's structure. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are both part of a larger entity of spiritual transcendence, an ideational structure that carries special weight because of the fragmentary nature of the community. By embedding the unstable "text" of the marriage contract in a broader system of representations, there is an attempt to stabilize the text, although, as we shall point out here and in subsequent chapters, there is always the potential for individuals to disrupt the semiotic code and introduce instability.

The wedding ceremony, according to Hart and Coon, used to last seven days but, for reasons of economic expediency, was reduced to three days. Both the numbers three and seven have special significance in Morocco; the derivation of the magic value of these numbers is obscure, although Westermarck (1926: 142) attributes the power of seven to the changing lunar phases. On the first two days of the *dhamghra,* separate festivals are held at the homes of the bride and groom. On the third day the bride leaves her parents' house and is taken to her new husband's house, usually the home of the groom's father. The first day is called *r-hanni tamzzyant* (little henna), the second, *r-hanni amggran* (big henna), and the third and most important day is dhamghra, which is also the generic term for the wedding celebration. After the celebrations on this third evening, the guests depart and the bride and groom have sexual intercourse, presumably for the first time. The bride does not see her own family until seven days after the *dhamghra,* when her kinsmen visit her for the first time as a married woman in the home of her husband. The ceremonies thus follow the pattern van Gennep detected for all such rites: separation, liminality, and aggregation.

At the separate festivals on the first day of *r-hanni tamzzyant,* each family invites kinsmen, friends, and neighbors to a day of feasting, song, and dance, paid for (as are all wedding expenses, irrespective of where the ceremony is taking place) by the father of the groom.

A red flag is hung on the roof of the groom's house and a white flag on the bride's to announce that the wedding has begun. In neither case is the choice of color accidental. The color of the bride's flag represents her virginity and is structurally repeated by the white cloth that is used to wrap her body when she is transported to her husband's house and by another white cloth that is used to catch the hymenal blood after the consummation of sexual intercourse and is displayed to prove her chastity. The red flag of the husband evokes the fertilizing power of the earth and especially of the red henna plant which represents both fertility and strength. Since *r-hanni* is also the word used for manure, it possesses within the folk etymology additional associations of nature and fertility (cf. Hart, 1976: 458). Red is also the primary color of the wedding chest (Fig. 4.1), or *asunduq,* within which are carried portions of the bride's dowry; the chest metaphorically represents her soon-to-be-impregnated womb.

Because the wedding ritual is a time of hazard for both the bride and groom, as well as for their parents and other guests—all of whom are vulnerable to such hazards as the evil eye, magical spells, and hostile spirits—elaborate precautions are taken to discourage evil or mischief. The groom is constantly attended by a group of male attendants, his *iwziren;* and the bride by an analogous collection of female relatives and friends (*dhiwzirin*). These companions form separate entourages for the bride and groom and follow them whenever they appear in public. At all public appearances the bride and groom are covered from head to foot; the groom with his *jallaba,* worn hooded over his face, and the bride under a canopy of white cloth.

On the evening of the first day of the wedding ritual, the ceremony of little henna occurs separately at the homes of the bride and groom. The bride's younger sister prepares a thick paste of henna by mixing dried leaves of the plant with boiling water in a bowl; when the mixture has cooled and has a thick consistency, it is applied to the bride's feet and hands. Since the bride is about to enter into a life of childbearing, anything she touches has both fertilizing and benevolent potential; thus, her *dhiwzirin* also applies the same henna to themselves. Their sharing of the common bowl of henna symbolizes their unity with her and their desire both to protect her and to share her good fortune. The red dye is applied in a similar ceremony to the groom's hands and feet, as well as to his companions who likewise share in its protection and potency.

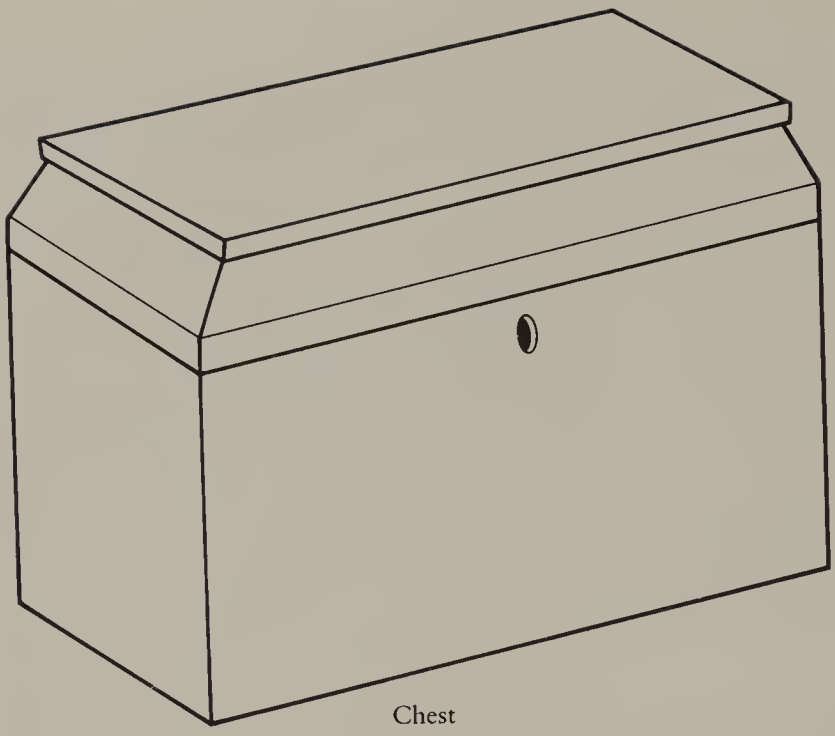
On the second evening of the wedding, the henna ceremony is repeated, only this time the paste is applied more thickly to cause an even deeper red staining of the skin. At the "big henna," or *r-hanni amqqaran,* both the bride and the groom are smeared with the dye, although the bride receives a heavier coating to protect her in the journey from her parents' house to the home of her spouse.

On the afternoon of the final day of the wedding, a group of men from the groom's family fetches the bride. She is wrapped from head to foot in a long, white cloth, covering her in the same fashion that a dead body is shrouded. The women who prepare her take a twig (*qubbth*) from the grapevines and attach it around her head to form an arch. They hang a long-tasseled handkerchief, *tasebnath,* over the outside of the bent grape branch. Her face is thus protected by her veil, the white shroud, and the *tasebnath*.

The bride is carried by her brother to an awaiting mule accompanied by the ululations of her female kin and friends. After she is seated on the mule, the mother pours barley grain into her daughter's lap. The bride's fertility and the fertility of crops are repeatedly interlinked during this ceremony. The barley associated with the *baraka* of the bride will be transferred to the home of her husband, where she will throw its seeds in front of his home, metaphorically linking human and plant fertility as well as the two households.

The processional to the groom's home is structurally equivalent to the processional of corpse to the grave. Again, the symbolism here does not appear accidental; the bride is about to lose one sort of status and become reborn in another. She, like the dead, is shrouded in a white cloth, the color of both purity and death. It is also the color of abandonment, as when pilgrims dress in white when they leave the secular world to enter the sacred one at Mecca. Moreover, she, like a dead person, is placed atop a mule, although in her case she is propped up vertically whereas the dead are stretched across the mule horizontally. The importance of the "death" ride is reasserted when, even if the bride has come a long distance in an automobile, it is still stopped several hundred meters from the groom's house, so that she can be placed atop a mule especially brought to traverse the remaining distance.

It appears important symbolically that a mule rather than a horse or donkey be chosen to convey the bride. Merely on statistical grounds, there are many more mules in the Rif than horses, but almost an equal number of donkeys. The mule, however, is consistently used for the wedding trip as opposed to the rarer horse or



Chest

Side

Top

Front

Fig. 4.1. Rifi Wedding Chest

ubiquitous donkey. Of the three species, the mule is the only one that is infertile and incapable of producing offspring. It is sexually suspended, just as the bride is, between two categories. The virgin bride is not quite a girl and not quite a woman. On the other hand, she is obviously not a male. In a metaphoric sense she also is in a suspended category. This suspension of male-female categorization is systematically repeated by other complex and seemingly ambiguous roles such as those of the *dhiwzirin* and of the male dancers and wedding crier, a point to which we shall return.

The "death" of the bride is further reinforced by her leaving all of her childhood possessions behind in her father's house. Brides enter their new status with only the material possessions purchased from their dowry. These possessions—new clothing, pots and pans, scarves, and the like—are placed within the wedding chest or *asunduq,* which accompanies the bride on the back of a second mule. Westermarck (1926: 18) has suggestively noted the similar etymology of this box in Tangier where *a'mâmer* stands for both bridal box and bier.

The bride leaves behind not only the material possessions of her old life but also her parents, from whom she becomes ritually separated for a period of seven days only to be reunited with them on *siba-n-tislit,* or the seventh day of the bride ceremony, marking the end of her period of liminal separation and her aggregation into married status, a ceremony that signals the official termination of the wedding. The bride, when she leaves her home, is accompanied by her brother (who is responsible for keeping her atop the mule), her *dhiwzirin,* and the men from the groom's family who have come to fetch her. The fact that she is brought to the *dhamghra* by men of the groom's family does not suggest bride stealing, which is reported in other parts of the Mediterranean and Middle East. Such a course of action would break the contractual bonds upon which marriage in the Rif is based. The presence of the bride's brother as a member of her entourage ensures her family's contractual agreement to the wedding, whereas the men from the groom's family underline her break from her parental home and her incorporation as a new member of the groom's family.

During this journey the bride is in a state of jeopardy, not only from the practical standpoint of being completely wrapped in three layers of cloth so that she can barely move but also from the dangers of *jnun* and other evil spirits. In the days before the protectorate,

her processional was accompanied by gunfire to ward off evil spirits; today the use of firecrackers serves the same purpose.

Upon arriving at the groom's house, the bride is lifted off the mule by her brother in front of the entrance to the house, about midway between the bread oven to the left and the place of sacrificial slaughter to the right. An older woman of the groom's family, usually his father's sister, brings out a bowl with seven lighted candles in it. This bowl is placed near the bride's covered face, as if she were being offered warmth and light. Fire is also a means of keeping the *jnun* at bay and of protecting the girl from evil or harmful spirits. That it is being offered by a senior member of the groom's female relatives is a token that the bride is being incorporated into the protection of the female members of the household. The groom's paternal aunt then places barley brought from the bride's house into a bowl with a mixture of almonds and sugar from the groom's household. The bride's lower arms and hands are freed from their wrappings, and she throws a handful of barley twice to her right, twice to her left, and twice behind her, consecrating the space between the house (symbolically a female domain) and the fields (symbolically a male domain), on one axis, and the space between the bread oven (a female symbol) and the sacrifice area (a male symbol), on another (see Fig. 4.2). Since barley is the main staple of life in the Central Rif, the magical properties of the bride's henna and her *baraka* infest this particular grain with special fertilizing potency. The guests pick up a few of the seeds to mix in their grain for the coming season's sowing, thus explicitly associating the fertility of humans with that of plants.

Once the barley has been scattered, the bride's brother carries her into a room especially set aside for her during the wedding. The brother, a mediator between his own family and that of the groom's, leaves his sister alone and stands guard outside the chamber. The groom enters the room and remains with the bride for several minutes while he removes her *tasebnath* (the red scarf covering her face) and takes off the *qubbth* (the grapevine arched around the girl's head), which he breaks into seven pieces. Again, this is a recognition of the contiguity of plant and human fertility; the breaking of the *qubbth* symbolically anticipates the penetration of the virginal hymen which will occur the following day. The metonymic relationship is explicitly recognized: if the groom is unable to break the twig, he will be unable to complete sexual intercourse

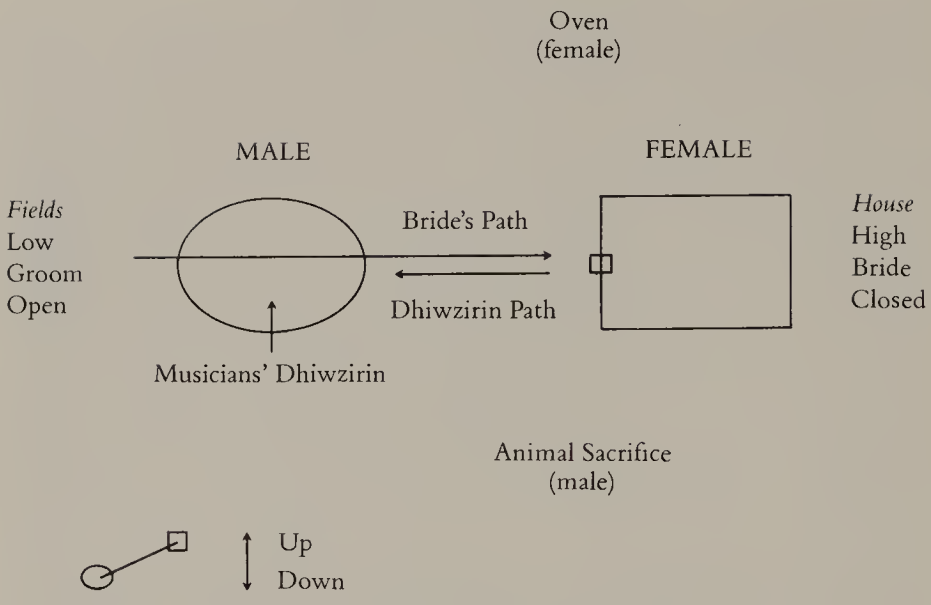


Fig. 4.2. Spatial Pattern of the *Dhamghra*.

with his bride. Once the groom has successfully broken the twig, he leaves the room and removes from underneath his *jallaba* two loaves of bread, representing again the connection between male sexuality and plant fertility.

The bride is now joined by her *dhiwzirin* and the women of the groom's family. His paternal aunt unwraps the white cloth within which the bride has remained since she left her own father's home in the "death" journey to her new life. The bowl containing the seven candles which were used to welcome the bride to the new household is placed on a ledge, where the lights continue to burn until they extinguish themselves.

Once the bride has been unwrapped, the mule that brought her to her new home is brought into the house by the groom's *iwziren,* assisted by the bride's brother. The animal's head is pushed through the door of the bridal chamber, where it is fed several mouthfuls of barley, a token meal for bringing the bride safely to the house. After the mule has been removed, a group of women from the groom's family drapes a white cloth (not the one in which she was wrapped on her arrival) like a canopy over the bride. The bride is still considered in a state of jeopardy, and this cloth, the candles, and the constant presence of women from her own family are supposed to protect her from any danger of sorcery, as well as keep her awake

during the entire night until she is visited by the groom in the morning. For a bride to fall asleep at her own wedding is a sign of disrespect and hostility and hence must be avoided. Security is not foolproof, as we noted in the previous chapter when we discussed Aliya and the hex placed on her by the mysterious cutting of her *ikfin,* or wedding dress.

After the white cloth, which is quite large and can envelop the bride and several other women, has been placed over her like a tent, she receives the various women from the groom's family as well as other invited female guests. The women, in small groups, huddle underneath the cloth, talking to the bride, wishing her well, and offering her a few coins (*ghramth*). These gifts are not as large as those given the groom and his father, presented later in the ceremony and discussed in chapter six; nevertheless, they are symbolically equivalent to male gift giving. Each gift represents the acceptance of the bride and a pledge to incorporate her into the reciprocal network of female alliances discussed in the previous chapter. The point is not how much wealth is transferred but rather the role gifts play in the semiotic discourse within the society whereby a frame of contractual meaning is constituted—in this case, between the bride and the female gift givers. The giving of *ghramth* is simply a sign indicating the establishment of positive social relationships. The quantity of coins is not as significant as the quality of the relationships they ensure.

After the bride has received her guests, the celebration in the main area commences. The spatial layout of the *dhamghra* always follows certain patterns which we have illustrated in Figure 4.2. The male and female guests are separated, with women congregating in or around the house. Since Rifi houses are traditionally built on raised ground to afford maximum scrutiny of approaches by potential enemies, the area from which the women observe the ceremony is usually higher than that in which the men assemble. Male guests gather in a large circle outside and below the house but on an axis between the threshold of the house and the fields. The field/house axis is traversed by another axis between the area of the baking oven to the right of the threshold and the area of animal sacrifice to the left, each about 10 meters from the doorway. The area of the oven is regarded as female space; it is where women carry out various tasks including baking bread in round earthen ovens. The area directly opposite it is male space where animals are ritually killed,

always by males. The bride is brought to the house through the space where the males congregate (although they are not in a circle when she enters but rather in two parallel rows). The bride scatters her *baraka*-blessed barley toward the female space of the oven to her left, the male space of ritual sacrifice to her right, and the male gathering space directly behind her. It is along the bride's entrance space, a kind of invisible line defined by these various axes, that the bride and groom's *dhiwzirin* of virgin girls leave the house or female space and enter the male circle where they perform. The bride, once she enters the house, remains within the protection of female space which can be entered only ritually by the groom, the bride's brother, the groom's *iwziren* (who assist with the mule), and the groom's father and brother. The groom himself, after he has broken the grapevine twig, returns to the male circle and remains within the circle for the rest of the night of the *dhamghra*.

Although the spatial arrangement of the wedding ceremony appears to be strictly coded according to male and female domains, there are a number of contradictions to what might be expected. Since these dislocations are systematically ordered, we must expect that they are related to the semiotic episteme within which Rifi culture operates. Hints to this episteme can be found in the status of the bride who, in her travels from parents' home to husband's home, appears to take on a suspended identity, neither alive nor dead, neither unmarried virgin nor wife (and since not female, perhaps male). The fuzziness of her status is not so much due to the ambiguity of her social category but to the complexity of it. Rather than being a combination of categories and hence ambiguous, she is a divergence of categories (male and female, dead and alive). What occurs in the *dhamghra* is a destabilization of categories; certain categories of both males and females perform in ways that transcend ordinary expectations.

As the bride enters a suspended category of virginity and marriage, so too do the other unmarried girls, although they are in less jeopardy and not as surrounded with ritual paraphernalia. At every wedding ceremony the unmarried girls, members of the groom's and of the bride's family (their *dhiwzirin*), dance (*dhfurjth*) and sing verses (*izran*) within the large circle of male guests. These girls have danced separately at the henna ceremonies the previous two evenings and now perform in alternating quartets, one from the groom's side, the next from the bride's. As the bride goes through a rite of passage, these young virgins also pass through one, al-

though without the dramatic effect of symbolically dying and being reborn. Only when a girl has reached puberty and is eligible for marriage may she dance and sing before men at a *dhamghra*. Only by going through this ritual within a ritual is a virgin girl regarded as ready for marriage. It is theoretically possible for a father to prohibit his daughter's participation, but we heard of no instances of such a prohibition. To dance and sing before the men is a sign of matrimonial eligibility; unless a girl goes through the ceremony, she is not regarded as a potential mate.

Each quartet enters the male circle through the same space through which the bride approached the house. The girls do the *dhfurjth* dance in unison, and then each one of them sings a rhymed couplet of her own composition. The verses are often social commentaries, although they may be love songs or songs of rejection; they are often polemic and occasionally erotic. Since the following chapter is devoted to an analysis of these songs, we will here mention only two to give some indication of their significance. The first is ironic:

Madeshrah wuware na-we thanen awanu
Ra-la thasherethine agmathunt sufero

I have no songs. I'm like a rock which has fallen in a well.
Oh, my friend, catch the rock with a string.

The singer is here using the complaint "I have no songs" as a metaphor to say that no one has yet sought her in marriage; the very composition of the song, of course, disproves her lack of songs. In the second line she requests someone to come to her aid and help her get married. Since "well" (*wanu*), itself a trysting place for young men and women, has a double meaning referring also to vagina, the song has an erotic connotation reinforced by the phallic connotations of string. This song was recorded by the authors in 1965; another song using a similar "well" metaphor was recorded by Hart in 1954–55 (1976: 479; Hart's translation):

Allif-inu yuwi, dhashabyuxth w-anu
Ur iwi dhimlih minzi thaghaitu

My sweetheart [masc.] is with a crude girl at the well.
Let him not marry a nice girl so that he will forget me.

In this *izran* the singer damns a sweetheart (*allif-inu*) who has gone off with another girl. Since the audience is a community of face-to-

face relationships and possesses a high degree of knowledge about one another's affairs, the singer is besmirching a particular rival's reputation and rather neatly contrasting her own repute with that of the "crude" rival. Again, the association of the rival with the well implies that the other girl has given the singer's lost sweetheart sexual favors. Furthermore, the singer warns the other eligible virgins at the celebration that this is the sort of fellow that a "nice girl" might well avoid.

After each of the four girls has completed her verse, they perform the *shdhih* dance in unison. This dance is again explicitly erotic with the young girls undulating their bodies. Coon (1931: 138) described the dance in the following manner:

> The dancing is slow as far as the actual progression and movement of the feet is concerned. . . . each girl with her hands on the shoulders of the one in front of her, moves up and down. . . . a more rapid motion, however, takes place in the abdomen, hips, and shoulders, the dancers writhing in unison in a rapid muscle dance, stamping their feet in time with the music and moving them slowly back and forth.

As the girls dance, the young males beat their drums faster to encourage even more abandoned movement, and the older women ululate as they observe the girls from the protection of the house.

The Spanish ethnographer Emilio Blanco observed that the girls in the Rif generally wore veils when performing the dance (1946); by the time Hart did his fieldwork in the fifties, however, the veil was being replaced by dark glasses (1976: 170); and, during our fieldwork in the sixties, dark glasses were ubiquitous and the veil had disappeared. Both Blanco and Hart believed that the veil was a means of preserving the anonymity of the dancer; Hart (1976: 172) also suggested that veiling is a means of male subjugation of women. The problem with either of these explanations is, first, as Hart (1976: 170) notes, "a good many people in the audience may know who she [the dancer] is." Thus, the question of concealing one's identity, in any other than a fictive sense, seems off the point. The veil and dark glasses which have replaced it appear to be social masks; rather than preserving anonymity, they function as devices whereby young virgins can suspend rules of modesty and moderation. The dancers, like the bride, are in a suspended category, and they themselves appear to have adopted the dark glasses as a sub-

stitute for the veil, suggesting that the decision was one made by the women rather than one forced upon them by the men.

The dances and songs reveal something quite different than the concept that women have a subservient status. Both Blanco and Hart are aware of the complexity of the female role in the wedding, as the following quote from Blanco, translated by Hart (Spanish original, 1946; Hart translation, 1976: 172), indicates:

> The woman dances, plays, sings, and the man is seated, motionless, silent, huddled up, with the hood of his jillaba pulled up, all eyes, tense, on restless guard, suspicious, very alert to the song, to public judgement, to veiled allusions, to insidiousness and vengeance, fearful of imprudent or malevolent female ingenuity, which placates him or arouses latent discord in him. . . . The peace, the tragedy, and the comedy, the reputation, the prestige of the individual and of the family or group headman, is always (under these circumstances) at the mercy of feminine caprice. . . . There is no feast [without] uneasiness.

Since young unmarried girls are not supposed to act immodestly or display any overt sexual behavior around males, the erotic *izran* verses and the sensual *dhfurjth* dances appear at first to be anomalies, passionate acts by presumably asexual actors. But, as we have noted, male-female relationships are extremely complex among the Rifi, and the young virgins, like the bride, are momentarily in a suspended category in which, in the case of the songs and dances, they can publicly communicate their sexuality, their praise, their condemnation. Their performance at the weddings is not an inversion of their everyday experience since a polemic, agonistic trend is inescapably woven into the fabric of their lives.

Moreover, the married women also participate in the semiotic communication of the *dhamghra*. Although women of childbearing age must remain inside the house, they follow the events of the wedding through the windows of the house and comment among themselves on the songs. The post-menopausal women stand outside the house, watching the performances of the girls closely and communicating their support of and solidarity with the singers by ululating after each *izri* and every dance. The *zigharit* (a trill produced by rapid tongue movement) is a verbal marker by which these older women accord praise; its absence—the women can

withhold ululation—is a marker of disapproval. Both unmarried and married women participate in the social polemic of Rifi society, although in everyday life women may express their agonistic tendencies more guardedly than do men. In the context of the *dhamghra,* however, the situation is reversed, women conveying their sentiments publicly while men, as Blanco puts it, must remain silent and "huddled up."

There are, however, a few categories of males who transcend the reserved and passive character of men at the wedding ritual. One of these includes the professional male musicians and dancers (*imdhyazen*), whose music, dance, and song alternate with that of the *dhiwzirin*. The *imdhyazen* occupy a special status, for they are professionals especially hired to perform at weddings and usually come from other tribes. They are not present at every wedding since their services add an additional cost to the expenses of the ceremony which must be borne by the groom's father. Although these individuals occupy a hereditary position of low caste, their presence at the wedding is an index of the high status of the host. Like blacksmiths, market criers, professional butchers, tanners, and other participants in trades that require a high degree of public exposure, they are regarded as polluting and assigned to a caste-like category called *imazilen,* which Coon (1931: 192) glosses as "shameless ones." These castes are endogamous, passing on their occupation from one generation to the next. Their low status is partly based on the public nature of their livelihood, partly on their reputed licentiousness, and partly on the fact that they do not work the land. Since agricultural pursuits (and fighting in the pre-protectorate days) were primary markers of manliness, the musicians are regarded as something less than "real" men. Their possessions are their instruments, their dances, and their songs. These songs, called *mali,* are, according to Hart, "symbolic of social status in reverse: for *mali* literally means 'my property,' and the *imdhyazen* have, traditionally, little or no property" (1976: 171). The *imdhyazen* are often accompanied by dancing boys who wear female wedding costumes and sing and dance in mimetic imitation of the *dhiwzirin*. The older musicians are commonly believed to have homosexual relations with the young boys. Whether this is true or not, they certainly are allowed a good deal of license at the weddings. As Coon notes (1931: 139):

> the pipers [musicians] act as professional wits, specializing in double meanings, usually of an obscene nature. Remarks which would cause a fight if uttered by anyone else are received with great applause when uttered by a piper.

The fact that the only category of males who can perform within the male circle are somewhat androgynous is a parallelism to the suspension of categorical differentiation we have observed in the case of the bride and the *dhiwzirin*. The *imdhyazen* are not quite male, nor are they female. The ordinary men who compose the circle cannot perform within it; neither can the married women who remain within the confines of the house. The only individuals who can perform are those who appear to have a divergence of categories of identification. Just as the virgin girls can transcend the ordinary limits of proper female behavior, so too the *imdhyazen* can transcend those limits set for ordinary men. The major difference between the two destabilized categories is that virgin girls challenge the expectations from within their community while the *imdhyazen* are from outside the community. Hart (1976: 171) quotes a proverb, "amdhyaz n-ad-dshar ur isfarraj" which he translates "an *amdhyaz* [singular of *imdhyazen*] does not dance in his own community." He attributes this to the notion that the dancer only dances where he is not known and where his activities are accepted "because of his low status and apoliticality." Hart is undoubtedly correct in this as far as he goes, but we suspect that the *imdhyazen* exist, in part, as a counterbalance to the categorical divergences which take place among the virgin girls. When female dancers publicly challenge the male world with their licentiousness, it would be unseemly for the male guests to respond to the *dhiwzirin*. On the other hand, the *imdhyazen,* for whom the ordinary sexual distinctions do not apply, can act as substitutes for the assembled masculine community. Females—or at least one special category, the virgins—can act shamelessly by Rifi standards, only at their own relatives' and community's weddings, when they are still under the protective cloak of their own men. Men, on the other hand, cannot act shamelessly in their own community and hence must secure, for pay, a male substitute who is capable of transcending the limits of honorable male behavior. The substitution of licentious males for reticent males can be observed in another problematic context of the wedding, the gift-giving ceremony.

During the final evening of the *dhamghra,* each male guest is expected to present a gift of cash (*ghramth*) to the groom's father. This ceremony, discussed in detail in chapter six, is one of the few occasions in which money is handed over in public. Of course, money changes hands all the time in the Rif, including in such obviously public places as the markets. But on such occasions the actual exchange is furtive and calls a minimum amount of attention to itself. Partly out of fear of the evil eye, a status- and wealth-leveling mechanism, material exchanges tend to be hidden from public view. The gift-giving ceremony is obviously a necessary exception to this general rule. The gifts, like the token coins given the bride, represent more than monetary transfers from one man to another; they are pragmatic markers of the moral contract between giver and receiver. Each male guest presents a gift, the size dependent upon past reciprocal exchanges and the degree of closeness to the host. The donors include relatives of the groom's father, as well as his friends, neighbors, and other allies. Each gift represents both a material and a symbolic pledge of support not only of the marriage but of the families involved and of the overarching moral code of the community. If the gift giving is a moment of affirming contractual obligations of solidarity and loyalty, it is also a time of potential discord, distrust, divisiveness, and pollution. All the potentials for both the centrifugal and centripetal tendencies among the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen are simultaneously present. It is a moment during which the collective and agonistic sentiments hang precariously in balance; the spiritual, material, and social worlds of the Rifi are suspended between order and chaos.

The central figure in the collection of *ghramth* at the wedding is the crier, a man who receives each gift from its donor, places it in a brass tray in front of the groom and his father, and announces to the guests how much was given and by whom. This ceremony evokes one of the strongest taboos in the Rif because, although men are expected to be generous, they are not supposed to make public their generosity or boast of their wealth, behaviors that evoke jealousy and the evil eye. On the other hand, it is crucial that the entire community be aware that each of the host's supporters is solidly behind the marriage and, in effect, supportive of the host. As we noted in the previous chapter, alliances are not automatically generated by genealogy and those that exist are often brittle. The gift-giving ceremony is a way of publicly communicating continued

support. At the same time, the assembled male guests are supposed to display reticence and reserve; only a "shameless one" would personally announce his material support. Moreover, the wedding gift is potentially an occasion for public rivalry; a man may attempt to embarrass a foe by giving more than the appropriate amount, a case which we shall discuss in chapter six. Or the individual may declare disapproval by giving less than the expected amount. At no time in the public life of the *dchar* is the nexus between materiality and social support more sharply and collectively defined.

The person who mediates this dangerous and polluting transaction is the wedding crier, a man who, like the musicians, is especially hired from outside the *dchar* to perform this role. Like the *imdhyazen,* the crier is a substitute, performing a role that the men of the *dchar* cannot perform. Some of the most successful criers are men who have had amputations, their physical indeterminacy heightening their mediating potency. The most famous crier in the Ibuqquyen was a one-legged man who twirled his crutch in exaggerated phallic representations of how potent the young groom would be when he entered his bride. The crier dances and twirls about, even if occasionally on one leg, in front of the men within the circle; he makes ribald commentary and scatological jokes, as he mocks those who are slow in handing over their gifts and extravagantly praises the virtues of each donor. Men call him over and hand him the *ghramth,* which he then places on a tray as he does a parody of the dances that have been performed and cries out to the audience how much was received. His announcements are usually followed by the ululating of the older female guests in the background. Like the musicians, the crier is paid for this activity, although there is no hint that criers as a category fall into the *imazilen* class of shameless ones. This may be because, although musicians are from outside the tribe, criers are often members of the local tribe, although they do not perform in their own *dchars.* Criers are thought to be men who, because of physical disfigurement, have been forced into their profession rather than choosing it, a distinction which is blurred in the case of the musicians. Like the musicians and the *dhiwzirin,* however, the crier's status appears to be indeterminate since he is not quite a "whole" man.

As a suspended category, the crier mediates between donors and receivers of the wedding gifts in an arena of potential defilement, rivalry, and tension. He deflects onto himself the polluting elements

of handling money in public; by taking the money from the guest and depositing it on a tray, he takes on the roles of both donor and recipient, preventing both from "dirtying" their hands with cash. The exchange of money itself is not regarded as dangerous, but its context in a public ceremony creates an atmosphere of potential danger, from human envy or discontent, the evil eye (*dhittawin ta'affanain*), or harm from the *jnun*. Both the corporeal being and the social status of guests and host are in jeopardy. The crier, as an anomalous part-man, part non-man, is less endangered by the evil spirits. Moreover, as someone from outside the community, his own status is not endangered by the quarrels and machinations of members of the community. His character and actions are parallel to those of the professional musicians and stand in counterpoint to the assembled males, who remain reserved, as properly fits their status. In a curious way, the crier also seems to serve as a substitute for the official representatives of Islam, the *fqih* who mediates between the bargaining parties and witnesses the marriage contract and the local *qadi* (magistrate) who countersigns and seals the marriage document. Although the *qadi* and the *fqih* participate in the wedding preliminaries, neither they nor any other religious representatives are present during the *dhamghra* itself; the crier seems to be a licentious substitute for these decorous personages and their positive prescriptions.

After everyone has contributed his ceremonial offering, a brother of the groom's father takes the money-filled tray into the house, and the bride's and groom's *dhiwzirin* commence their dancing and singing again. These celebrations continue through the night and until the next morning, when the guests depart. The last guests to leave are the bride's *dhiwzirin,* who remain with her until the groom enters her chamber, for the first time since he removed the *qubbth*. The groom gives each girl a few coins and they depart, leaving him alone with his new wife. Sometime during that day or the following night, the couple has intercourse, presumably for the first time. Afterwards the groom presents his mother or his father's sister with a white cloth sprinkled with the blood from his wife's ruptured hymen; this flag is then displayed, accompanied by loud ululating, to the remaining female relatives who await in the courtyard. The defloration cloth is then sent to the bride's home; after inspection by her mother and other female relatives, it is returned to the groom's house, where it is kept for seven days and then ritually cleaned by the bride.

The Rifi bride and groom then spend a week in seclusion together. At the conclusion of this period, the bride's family visits her for the first time since she left her parents' home. This visit, the *siba-n-tislit* or "seventh day of the bride," marks the completion of the liminal period for the newly married couple and the aggregation stage that van Gennep describes as the culminating movement of all rites of passage. It is the rite which brings together for the first time since the commencement of the ceremony both the bride's and groom's parents.

There are usually four separate groups of people at the *siba-n-tislit:* the older men, including the fathers of the bride and groom, and other male relatives of both sides; the age peers of the groom who joke among themselves in noticeable contrast to the serious demeanor of the older men; the women of all ages from the bride's family; and the women of the groom's family, again of all ages. Among the men, generation divides one group from another, but they do not bifurcate along the lines of relatives of the bride versus relatives of the groom. Among the women, however, generation is less a factor than relationship with the bride or groom. The bride's relatives form one group of women, while the groom's relatives form another. This suggests that the aggregation ritual is more important in many ways for the women of the two families than for the men. Presumably any problems that existed in the relationship between the male members of the bride and groom have already been worked out at the numerous conferences over dowry and the signing of the marriage documents. Because the alliance has already been sealed, this visit does not appear to be a testing ground between men of the two families.

On the other hand, the relationship between the women of the two households appears, at least on the surface, still to be strained during this meeting, especially if the women of either side have not been consulted about the marriage decision in the first place. This is the occasion on which the bride's husband formally meets his mother-in-law (*dhadhuggwatsh*) for the first time. After kissing her on the forehead, he presents her with a small gift and gives scarfs to the other women of his wife's family. His behavior toward his mother-in-law is, as one would expect, highly deferential and sets up a pattern of respect and ritual avoidance which will characterize his future relationship with her.

After the guests have departed, the girl is no longer a bride but now a wife. She will put away the elegant costumes she has worn

for the past week and begin to dress in ordinary work clothing as she begins her apprenticeship as a worker in her husband's family. Hart (1976: 141) notes that an informant told him that a young wife in the Aith Waryaghar does not see her parents again for a full year after this visit. This comment seems, however, to be a case of hyperbolic rhetoric, in keeping with some Rifi males' desire to have control over their wives; this desire is, on the whole, impractical. Since parents visit their daughter when she becomes pregnant and must be invited, along with other affines, to the ritual naming ceremony which occurs seven days after the birth of a child, brides who conceive soon after the wedding obviously are visited several times by their parents in the first year of marriage.

So far in our description of the *dhamghra* we have noted various departures from everyday expectations of roles and status, but in each case these departures have systematically formed interlocking "sign systems" whose significance still reinforces the collective nature of the marriage ceremony. While we have argued that the *dhamghra* is potentially an unstable text, the material we have presented so far tends, in fact, to create stability. Thus, space is always divided in accordance with the rules we have described, brides always "die" and are reborn, gifts of *ghramth* are always given, dancing boys behave as girls and virgins address the male spectators. These reoccurring motifs suggest that the ritual "text" is quite stable indeed. Given the deep agonistic, polemic, individualizing tendencies which run through Rifi life, to what degree do performers stick to the script? As we have noted in the previous chapter, the participants in Rifi culture do not always feel the obligation to undervalue their own personal inclinations simply for the sake of collective well-being. The contractual aspects of the wedding text may at any moment be undermined by manipulative agonistic discord. If Rifi men and women agree to the contractual solidarity of the marriage, they always do so in the conditional sense of *n'shala,* whereby God (and by implication man, nature, and spirits) also agrees. If participants are momentarily unified in the rite of passage, it is a unity which is mutually implicated with the agonistic nature of the community.

An example of the fragility of the *dhamghra* code was expressed in the Ibuqquyen tribe in 1966. 'Abdallah, a wealthy man in his mid-thirties of the *dchar* of Izmourin, had as a young man lost an opportunity to marry a girl he was very much in love with. Over

the years 'Abdallah had refused to marry, but his family became increasingly insistent and finally arranged a marriage with Fadma, the daughter of a wealthy man in the neighboring tribe of Aith Waryaghar. The marriage was essentially a political alliance between wealthy and powerful families. Fadma, who was sixteen, was very opposed to the match and threatened suicide if she were forced to marry against her will.

Despite Fadma's opposition, the wedding contract was drawn up, the dowry exchanged, and in due course the *dhamghra* ceremony took place. When Fadma arrived at 'Abdallah's house, however, she refused the barley grain offered her by his aunt. When 'Abdallah's aunt remonstrated with the girl, urging her to share her *baraka* with the guests, Fadma defiantly shook her head. The aunt pulled the bride's arms from her lap and placed her hand over Fadma's, forcibly scattering the barley. Fadma pulled her arm away and slipped it back under the white cloth wrapping her body. The older woman gave up at this point, angrily throwing the grain to the crowd herself, and then marched off in disgust.

Fadma's pattern of ritual refusal continued throughout the ceremony. Shortly after 'Abdallah broke the *qabbth* and she was unwrapped, she fell asleep, violating a major taboo. Her *dhiwzirin* reflected her negative attitude by refusing to allow the female guests into the bridal chamber to pay their respects and their *ghramth*. Some of Fadma's *dhiwzirin* refused to take part in the dancing and singing. Several of the guests expressed the opinion that Fadma had cursed her own wedding; because of the general suspicion that intertribal marriage evokes, coupled with the bride's breach of protocol, few of the guests gave the marriage much chance for survival. Oddly enough, one of the few people who was sympathetic toward Fadma was 'Abdallah, perhaps because he saw a similarity between Fadma and his own sweetheart, who had with equal bitterness opposed her marriage to someone else years before.

Another instance that exposed the fragility of the code was the marriage of Tamimunt, a young girl who was married against her will to a man whose family Tamimunt's mother disapproved of. This wedding became a contest between women, with both Tamimunt's side and the groom's female relatives unhappy. At the *siban-tislit* celebration, the women of Tamimunt's family appeared in elaborate costume, wearing their finest clothing. The women from her family all collected in her room and refused to invite the

groom's mother or other female relatives from his family to join them.

While Tamimunt's relatives sat inside on raised couches, the women of the groom's family remained outside on mats in the courtyard. Their exclusion allowed the girl to be considerably more frank about her affines and her relationship with her husband as she talked with her kinswomen. The groom's female relatives expressed animosity toward Tamimunt and said that, although she could get her husband to do anything for her now, once the boy became accustomed to marriage, she would have to follow his orders. They also looked forward to the commencement of her labors the following day, which would bring her directly under their supervision.

There are, of course, many other elements which can destabilize the ritual, producing disruptions and mischief. At one *dhamghra* on the border between Ibuqquyen and Aith Waryaghar, we saw several young males from the Aith Waryaghar enter an Ibuqquyen *dchar* and begin to make rowdy comments. In the course of the dispute, one of the uninvited visitors drew a knife and stabbed a member of the Ibuqquyen. The men then chased the Aith Waryaghari off by hurling rocks at them. At another ceremony in the Aith Waryaghar a young man became so incensed at an *izri* lyric he believed was aimed at him that he threw rocks at the singer. In this case he was an invited guest but had overstepped the rules of propriety which demand that the target of an *izri* accepts its condemnation, at least in public. A group of his peers grabbed him and escorted him from the wedding.

Not only do men disrupt the *dhamghra;* women also display a discordant agonism on occasion. Hart describes instances of *suhur,* or sorcery, when the women of one lineage seek to best the women of another in singing and dancing at the wedding. According to Hart "an old woman of one lineage takes a mouthful of salt and olive oil which she then spits out into the fire in the courtyard where the tambourines are warmed up [made taut with heat]. This act makes the women of the other lineage quarrel amongst themselves and leave the festival" (1976: 154; for a similar account among the neighboring Igzinnayen, see Coon, 1931: 162).

One of the major areas of potential discord is over the virginity of the bride. The problem is not so much whether the girl is a virgin or not, but the necessity of producing evidence of defloration. Given the youth and inexperience of most newly married couples,

it is quite possible that one or the other will have difficulties on the first night of sexual experience. The number of rituals to increase sexual potency explicitly recognizes this possibility. Moreover, at a time when the evil eye, jealousy, and sorcery are so prevalent, sexual capacities may be magically arrested. Coon (1931: 161) mentions the magic of a boy thwarted from marrying a girl who loved him and forced to marry someone else. The boy acquired from a magician a spell carved on a loaf of bread. He broke the bread into seven pieces and gave these pieces to the bride, who ate one on each day of a seven-day wedding ceremony. By the eighth day the groom was unable to have an erection with this girl until he acquired a countercharm. "It is said that this procedure will almost inevitably cause the groom to divorce his bride."

Thus, the production of hymenal blood is by no means assured, although it is regarded as a necessary sign of the *bona fide* condition of virginity. Hart argues that, should the bride not be a virgin, the most common reaction is for the groom furiously to return his bride and to demand the return of the entire dowry. Alternately, and more rarely, the hymenal blood might be faked. Our own conclusions are quite the opposite. We personally knew of no case where a man sent his bride home and demanded the dowry back, although in the case of Aliya and her cut gown such a request would probably have been legitimate and, in fact, her husband did receive the return of some goods. What appears much more common is that the blood is faked, as several young men explained to us, by using chicken blood. Since some boys did have intercourse with their fiancées before marriage, they were aware of the problem and the necessary solution.

In this examination of the wedding ceremony as a system of representations, we have continually traversed the themes of fertility, death and rebirth, initiation, and the suspension of categories of maleness and femaleness. We have noted that there are certain kinds of expectations and responses within the ceremony which, if they are different from everyday life, nonetheless can be fitted into a larger semiotic design of Rifi life. At the same time we have noted that there are disruptions, manipulations, and passions which cause the wedding "text" to appear, at least momentarily, unstable. We have suggested that at least one of the functions of the ritual is to stabilize the text.

If the wedding can be regarded as a semiotic text, a kind of

discursive operation at the level of articulating relationships among humans and between humans and nature, then presumably the organization of semantic features within the *dhamghra* is related to the organization of other kinds of schema in the society. One exemplum of this redundancy is the female ritual of the rain dance, where a wooden bread shovel (*aganja*) is dressed as a bride in the clothes of a recently married human bride. The virgin girls of a *dchar* carry the "bride" to the various houses of the community and to the local mosque, singing *izran* requesting God to send rain (cf. Coon, 1931: 162). Since this "marriage" in many ways parallels the *dhamghra* of humans, we will conclude this chapter with an analysis of its metaphorical content and the relationship between its metaphors and human and plant fertility.

In order to understand the ritual of the "bride of the rain" or *dhasrith w-unzar,* we must return momentarily to an important physical object in human marriage, the *asunduq* or wooden bridal chest filled with gifts from her husband that accompanies the bride to her new home. The *asunduq* is a small box about 61 cm (2 feet) long and 30.5 cm (1 foot) deep. Made especially for a particular wedding by a local carpenter, it is painted red with various stylized designs in blue and green (see Fig. 4.1). We have already discussed the symbolism of the color red, representing the earth, potency, and fertility, and its importance during the henna rituals; blue, the color of the sky, and green, the color of growing plants, complete the cycle necessary for plant reproduction; their use on the *asunduq* is one more iteration of the links between human and vegetative fertility. Depicted on the chest is the hand of Fatima, a feminine sign to ward off the evil eye and infertility; the chest is also decorated with a stylized womb within which a veiled woman is surrounded by a border of coiled snakes symbolizing the male phallus. On each side of the front panel are painted trees and plants springing from a horizontal plane at the bottom of the chest, while stylized raindrops fall from a parallel horizontal plane at the upper edge of the panel. The top of the *asunduq* is bordered by a series of serpents with a woman in the center protected by a triangle of smaller snakes. To each side of the woman within the snake triangle are stylized icons of barley plants in full bloom. At the center of the front of the chest is a keyhole for which the bride is given a key to open the box containing her new possessions, the gifts originating from her husband.

The semiotic transformations of human and plant fertility are here linked in specific metaphorical relationships. The bride is in possession of an empty space, her new chest but also her vagina and womb. This space is to be filled with the gifts of her husband—not only the material objects in the box but also his offerings of semen and fetus (the Berbers have a male-centered view of reproduction) which will enter the key aperture that unlocks this complex of fertility signals. Moreover, as we noted earlier, the word for bridal box in some dialects is also the word for bier (Westermarck, 1926: 8), reinforcing the transformation from death to regeneration reminiscent of the dying and reviving gods of the ancient Mediterraneans.

The *dhasrith w-unzar* ceremony contains many elements which are isomorphic to the *dhamghra* and the symbolism of the *asunduq,* suggesting the interconnection between the social, natural, and cosmological worlds of the Rifi Berbers. This ceremony, held during times of drought in the Rif, has been described by a number of ethnographers, including Biarnay (1917: 176–78), Westermarck (1926: 259), Coon (1931: 162), and Hart (1976: 50–51). Similar ceremonies have been described by Bourdieu for the Algerian Kabylia (see his comments on "bride of the field," 1977: 103) and for the Rwala Bedouin by Musil (see his discussion of "mother of the rain," 1928: 10–13, and especially the photograph on page 13). In these various discussions the ceremony is treated as a part of agricultural ritual and never viewed in a larger symbolic context. Whatever the merits of our own interpretation, we would suggest that an advantage of semiotic analysis is that it insists that such rituals be placed in a larger context.

The ceremony consists of dressing a wooden bread shovel (*aganja*) in a bridal gown; the grape twig that adorns the virgin bride is arched across the top of the shovel and then covered by a bridal headdress. The ladle is carried through the *dchar* by a *dhiwzirin* of virgin girls, who accompany the "bride" dancing, singing *izran,* and playing tambourines, as they visit the houses of the community; at each they receive a few coins, in effect the *ghramth* given at human marriage. At the conclusion of the ceremonial visits, the "bride" is set up in a barley field. In the meantime the males of the *dchar* have collected at the local mosque to perform a ceremony called *tittan unzar*—"to ask for rain," where they sacrifice a bull or goat. The meat from the sacrifice is called *sadaqa,* a term related to

both the *sdhaq,* wedding dowry, and to *asunduq,* the wedding chest. This meat is then distributed among the congregation of the mosque, each member returning to his home where there is a small feast analogous to the one held at the wedding.

Although the *dhasrith w-unzar* seems only tangentially related to human marriage, except for the obvious contiguity of ritual elements, it is in fact a metaphorical restatement of the elements in human marriage. The redundant elements are quite clear. Barley, planted and cared for by men, is the major subsistence crop; it is converted into the primary staple by women who bake it in their earthen ovens, which occupy a space opposite the masculine space where animals are sacrificed. This grid around the house becomes elongated as the men collect at the mosque (another male space), where they sacrifice an animal to make an offering to God (*sadaqa*) during the *tittan unzar.* Meanwhile, women take the primary tool for converting barley into bread, the ladle, an object intimately associated with their own labor activities and their sexual identity, and dress it as a bride. As we have already seen, the fertility of human brides and barley is closely interwoven both in the pictorial representations of the *asunduq* and in the throwing of barley when the bride arrives at the groom's home. The germination of new plants, however, like the reproduction of human beings, requires both sexes. Semen, like rain (*anzar*), is a masculine noun, while bride and earth or land are feminine ones (a connection noted by Father Ibañez and quoted by Hart, 1976: 50). For the feminine earth to germinate plants, the rain must descend. In order to facilitate this happy event, the earth must be married to the sky. To represent the feminine earth, the Rifi women use the wooden ladle, which is used to place the barley dough into an earthen, womb-shaped oven. The sequence of expected events is quite clear: the rain [semen] fertilizes the earth [womb] which germinates the barley [offspring] which is transformed through the mediation of feminine objects such as ovens and bread shovels into life-sustaining food.

If the ceremony has been conducted properly, the semen/rain will be released and join the womb of the earth; crops of barley, fruit, and vegetables will be the "offspring" of this union between the masculine and feminine spirits. The redundancy to human marriage is clear. In human marriage, a virgin girl is married to a bridegroom; her vagina is a ladle by which the bridegroom's semen is inserted into her womb. In the marriage between the sky and earth,

the ladle is transformed into a bride, and the sky releases its semen/rain into the womb of the earth. The transformations are reiterated at the level of physical objects if we examine the symbolism of the wedding chest. The *asunduq* is a box which is empty; it is filled by the new husband with his gifts to the bride. This empty space of the bride (her *asunduq,* vagiṅå, womb) is filled with various gifts from the husband (his gifts of clothing, penis, semen, fetus). Only with the presentation of the offering, purchased with the *sdhaq,* just as the sky is married with the sacrifice of an animal or *sadaqa,* can the marriage be complete and the offspring legitimized. Only with the gifts of *ghramth* can the members of the *dhamghra* or participants in the rain ceremony partake and share in the power of the collective ritual. As the husband fills his wife, so too does the sky fill its bride with the gifts of rain.

In this and the previous chapter we have examined various elements in Rifi marriage. Although these elements are drawn from seemingly disparate systems such as the organization of alliance, the codification of ritual, aesthetic expression, cosmological assumptions, and material objects, they all seem to converge. We do not believe this convergence is a creation of the ethnographers; rather it stems from a general semiotic system of communication which operates on several different planes. Each level mutually implicates the other levels to create a semiotic discourse, a means of allowing the Rifi to apprehend his or her world. We do not believe that this semiotic codification is simple, much less that it is immutable. Quite the contrary, we believe that all important human codes are complex and that human beings are constantly rearranging the elements within the system of meaning, attempting to impose their will upon the code.

If one regards Rifi society as being a constant movement between the counterpoints of solidarity and manipulation, one would expect to see a certain amount of provocation and challenge. In the next chapter we shall examine this provocation more closely as we analyze the rhetorical function of the *izran,* the lyrics sung at the wedding. These lyrics are not autonomous speech acts but rather elements in the agonistic and contractual aspects of Rifi society operating on the plane of verbal language to express one more level of the general sign system which we seek to unravel.

FIVE

The Intertextuality of Rifian Poetry

IN OUR ATTEMPT to make certain features of Rifi life intelligible, we have argued that elements in one system of signs appear to be interconnected with elements in adjacent signifying systems. In the previous two chapters we sought to relate elements of social organization to aspects of rituality. In both those chapters we concentrated on nonlinguistic forms of semiotic communication; we shall now shift our field of inquiry directly to the use of language, although admittedly a rather special form of language: poetic discourse. In the previous chapter, we discussed how the *dhamghra* brings into being certain kinds of action which are not characteristic of everyday behavior. The wedding ritual also creates certain kinds of unique speech acts: the oral compositions that the *dhiwzirin* sing at the wedding. The poetic act is both collective and individual, representing the contractual aspects of the society as well as the polemic and agonistic ones.

The *izran* (singular, *izri*) sung at the wedding festivals have a double function. On the one hand, they are conscious endeavors, based upon individual strategies, to bring about specific results; on the other hand, the *izran* are part of a larger system of collective and communal representations. Our aim is not only to analyze the songs in order to understand their strategic meaning but also to reveal correspondences between the shape of Rifi society and the poetry of the wedding.

As we have pointed out, Berber society emphasizes both collective and individualistic elements; its code of communication is

constituted by both these aspects. Thus, while the communicative event of singing *izran* expresses a collective message from unmarried women to the male community, each *izri* can, at the same time, illuminate the individual and personal responses of the composer, reasserting the duality between agonistic individuality and contractual solidarity.

The songs are an expressive form that differentiates Rifi thought and behavior. On the one hand, the songs reflect an internal cultural structure, a semiotics of the collective structure of meaning. From one standpoint of communication, any lyric represents not the composer herself but rather the entire group of females. The content of the song in this case is not as important as the fact that virgins (a suspended category who disappear in everyday public discourse) can paradoxically be judges, mediators, critics, and interpreters of social reality. The songs are formulaic in that their *function* is to draw attention to that feature of the semiotic code controlled by female "regulators" of the code. The lyrics of the songs operate at two different levels, but they have, nevertheless, the same communicative function: that of allowing females to participate in the cultural dialogue.

We have previously noted a tension among the Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen between collective sentiments (contracts) and agonistic individualism (a breach of contract). A single *izri* can embody simultaneously both these collective and noncollective, centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. Each song is part of a larger semiotic system, whereby the singer participates in two "speech acts" with a single lyric—one conveying her personal experiences and dependent, so to speak, on her own interpretations of the world; and a second, in which she embodies a collective persona, being part of a socially shared pattern. Poetry, as a communicative event, is constituted by enormous variability reflecting the individual strategies of the performers; but in its second function, variation is much more restricted because poetic elements can be interpreted in a more schematic manner, manifesting the shared goals and strategies of the female members of the culture.

Wedding poetry can be viewed, therefore, as a series of individual messages within a broader code of female strategy. The messages serve the teleological end of allowing young women to make evaluative judgments. Although each judgment is personal, the context in which it is made is communal, representing a meta-com-

ment on the social and ontological worlds. The songs' performance occurs within male space at the wedding, and the singers represent a "penetration" of females into collective male space. This female penetration within the *dhamghra* allows an interplay between male and female domains of discourse and sets up the challenge and riposte characteristic of agonistic society.

The study of Berber verse as a signifying system requires us to examine a variety of contexts, some of which were discussed in the previous chapter. Seen as part of a code, any song's messages become intelligible only when we have gone through a number of descriptive steps. The first is to place the performance in the context of the event in which it takes place, the *dhamghra*. The code itself, of which the songs are only one segment, makes sense only as part of a discourse within the cultural life from which it emerges. Presumably, only if a society warrants such verbal discourse is it socially permissible. Since we have recorded a number of parallelisms of a like nature between moral forms and social practices, a similar connection within poetic discourse can be hypothesized as part of a larger signifying system; each particular instance is coextensive, with the configuration in one realm of behavior or expression representing a set of similar distinctions in other ideas and practices.

Once we have analyzed the performing context, we must decode each message at both a specific and a general level. Both these levels of significance are intertextual in that explication of *izran* is only possible through its connection to the wider indigenous frame of reference. To understand the metaphorical substance of any *izri,* we must recognize not only the bare facts of repudiation, encouragement, competition, honor, sorrow and loss, but also the general pattern of sentiment, passion, and strategy. The songs serve a double function in this type of investigation because not only do they reveal the individualizing polemics of the singers but they also serve, as a corpus, as a representation of the general pattern. While the lyrics differ considerably in their use of metaphor, they collectively etch out a repetitious pattern of the grammar of emotions. Finally, we can compare both individual lyrics and broader patterns in the lyrics sung by the *dhiwzirin* with those of the *imdhyazen,* the male singers at the *dhamghra* who masquerade as women.

The *izran* are short lyrics, each made up of a single couplet, which follow a strict rhyme scheme (*aa*). There is occasional reference in the literature to longer forms of three, six, eight, or more lines, but these have inevitably been collected from male informants

who presumably have stitched together a number of the short lyrics (cf. Justinard, 1926: 61–64; Renisio, 1932: 242–46.) The lines are roughly twelve syllables long, although some contain only nine syllables and others as many as fifteen. Rather than using formulaic material in oral narratives, Berber poets strive for unique, self-conscious composition. The individuality of the *izran* and the amount of revision they receive suggest the polished compositional process usually associated with a literary rather than an oral poem. There are, of course, formulaic aspects of the *izran* tradition: each lyric begins and ends with a fixed chorus and many of the *izran* commence with a riddle in the first line which is solved in the second line. Each poem, however, stresses the unique, personal aspects of the poet's situation.

Each song begins with the refrain *ay-aralla-buya,* which may be repeated several times by the group of four girls before one of them begins her *izri*. This chorus can be roughly translated as "Oh mother, oh father." The initial *ay* is a vocative like the English "oh." *Aralla* is etymologically related to *la la,* literally madame or lady but standing for "mother"; and *buya* is a form of *baba* or "father." Hart interprets the meaning of the refrain as referring to the *dhiw-zirin*'s hopes for the future parenthood of the bride and groom (1976: 169). Our informants were less clear about the meaning of the chorus, some suggesting that it was evocative of the bride's mother and father, who were absent. Whatever the meaning, we agree with Hart's general commentary on the *izran* (1976: 169):

> *Ay-aralla-buya* is a highly symbolic, if equally highly fragmented, theme running through most of Rifian life, and in its way it is a commentary on Rifian history, hopes, and aspirations. In their emphasis on both the frustrations and the triumphs of day-to-day life and love, the *izran* couplets, if systematically collected year by year (for they change constantly, and new ones are rapidly invented), would provide the raw anecdotal material for such a commentary.

As we noted in the last chapter, the ritual of dancing and singing at the *dhamghra* is itself a rite of passage, signaling a young girl's entrance on the "marriage market." Thus, it is necessary for every Rifi girl to learn how to dance the shuffling steps of the *dhfurjth,* which accompanies the *izran,* as well as the more abandoned steps of the *shdhih*. Moreover, all the young virgins must learn to compose and perform their original lyrics. Although one dances and

sings only a relatively few times, it is important for every female to be accomplished in these arts, and young girls of six start learning from their sisters and other female relatives and mates. The complaint "I have no songs" in a lyric we shall shortly discuss is a metaphor signifying that its singer is unattractive and that no one wishes to marry her. The whole point of the *dhiwzirin* is to move from the category of performers to that of bride. The more skilled a girl is in the arts of the *dhiwzirin,* the more likely she is to be judged well and married advantageously. Through the performance of her songs, a young Rifi woman can encourage a favored suitor, announce an engagement, remind the young men of the tribe that she is in love, shame or ridicule an unwanted suitor, or justify breaking an engagement. As we suggested in chapter three, the strategy of mate selection is complex and labile; the performance of *izran* is the clearest index of the perception by unmarried girls of the fluidity of mate selection and preliminary arrangements. A girl composes *izran* while she is gathering water, watching her father's flocks of goats and sheep, or going about other daily tasks. Although the poems are short, it is not unusual for a virgin to spend several months working on a couplet, revising and searching for the *mot juste* as she readies her lyrics for the *dhamghra* season. The lyrics constantly undergo revision as the composer consciously seeks to enhance the meaning of the song. Because the singers range in age from thirteen to about twenty (by which time most young women are married), a wide range of expertise and accomplishment differentiates the composers, some of whom become skilled poets whereas others produce only "passable" *izran.* The singers also undergo a wide range of differences in experience—the most profound lyrics often stemming from those events which provoke the deepest passions. The quality of the songs thus varies considerably, and only the cleverest survive the marriage season and become incorporated in Rifi memory.

The songs, whether they merge into the folk memory or are forgotten, play a part in the continuity of Rifi society, its founding of families, and its reproduction. While the *dhiwzirin* sing, offering themselves to their chosen men or scorning others, the girls who have not yet reached puberty listen carefully, trying to memorize the songs of the performers and waiting expectantly for the day when they, also, will be adolescents and will be allowed to sing. Sometimes a girl will use a song she has heard sung by another girl at a previous wedding; the most highly prized songs, however, are

those which, although they may borrow metaphors from previous songs, are given new and unusual directions. To copy someone else's composition lessens its polemic impact.

The performance of songs by the *dhiwzirin* takes place on all three nights of the wedding ceremony, although on the nights of the big and little henna celebration separate performances occur, with some girls singing at the groom's house and others at the bride's father's home. Only on the third evening of the *dhamghra* are the two sets of *dhiwzirin* brought together, an event which sometimes occasions rivalry between the two, as we note below in "The girls of Bulma" and "Good evening, good evening" *izran*.

The girls, within the performing context, are entitled to extraordinary verbal latitude and even license, and the victims of their songs are expected to suffer in dignified silence. The only males present at the ceremony who can respond in kind to the girls are the male *imdhyazen,* who, like the girls, occupy a blurred and suspended sexual category. The males of the *dchar,* including fathers, brothers, and suitors, must remain silent, if occasionally sullen. For a male member of the *dchar* to react intemperately would not only bring him scorn from the women of the *dchar* but also from the adult males, who oversee the decorum of the *dhamghra* and reject any male who oversteps the bounds of proper behavior.

Armed with a freedom to say what they please and arrayed in the finery purchased by their fathers and the dark glasses that they themselves often buy, the girls sing a few choruses of *ay-aralla-buya* as they enter the male circle of spectators. They perform in groups of four and sing the chorus in unison, although each girl presents her own *izri* as a solo performance. Holding tambourines (*addjun*) and small drums (*tabours*), the girls do a slow side-shuffle dance together as they sing, keeping time with their hand instruments. After the chorus is completed, the first girl presents her song. If the audience likes it, the men will shout *yallah* to encourage the performers as they break into another round of the chorus; the tempo quickens, and the side shuffle gives way to the *shdhih,* a dance which features an undulating, quivering vibration of the hips and breasts. The men pound their hand drums harder and often set off firecrackers, while the older women and the nonperforming *dhiwzirin* stand off in the protection of the house, ululating. After a few minutes of dancing, the tempo slows, the girls resume their side-shuffle, and the second girl sings her song and so on, until each of the quartet has performed. The girls exit to a last chorus of

ayaralla-buya and are replaced by a new quartet. The singers carefully observe one another so that when they enter the performing area they will not offer songs too similar to those already presented.

The poems, then, like the dances and music, are obviously something more than aesthetic discourse, although they are also part of Rifi aesthetics. The poems are certainly creations for enjoyment but are obviously more than that. *Izran,* within the context of the *dhamghra,* are analogous to alliances or exchange: they are part of a social discourse and of the allocation of power and prestige. While they are instruments of individuals, they are also moments of what Berque in another context labeled collective "crystallization" (1978: 295). Berque refers to the great Arabic *qasidas* as giving shape to Middle Eastern culture; Berber *izran,* on a smaller scale, accomplish some of the same functions. In order to understand the social contours created by the *izran* we must now examine them at a more specific level.

Many of the lyrics sung by the *dhiwzirin* at the weddings have to do with the composers' attitudes toward specific male members of the audience. In some cases the songs seek to encourage a particular suitor; others complain about lost affection or pursue a strategy of rejection. The latter are particularly difficult since, by rejecting a suitor, a girl may also be publicly countering the wishes of her parents. The following lyric is an example of a young girl's attempt to thwart her father's plans to marry her to someone she regards as unacceptable:

A thsib- banah-tasebnath: astsah ho fades
jemah zucar-inik. Nish d shik udentes

I am going to wash my headscarf; I shall
hang it on the *fades* bush.
Take your sugar away. You and I aren't good together.

This song relates to several of the themes we have discussed earlier or will take up in the next chapter. When a prospective groom or his father wishes to sound out another man about the possibilities of marrying his daughter, he presents that man with a number of gifts (*zattat*), the most important, from a symbolic point of view, being a cone of sugar. Sweet mint tea is presented to every guest who enters the household, but when men come to ask for a bride they bring their own sugar. If the father of the prospective bride accepts this sugar, he has acknowledged a willingness to discuss the

possibility of arranging a marriage for his daughter. The acceptance of the sugar is thus a "message" that a girl's father is open to negotiations. The poet in line two requests that the message be canceled because she is uninterested in the match.

The scarf of the first line (*tasebnath*) is the traditional garb used to mask the bride on her "death" journey to the groom's house. Again, the singer is rejecting the suitor by announcing that his quest has sullied, at least in her opinion, the headscarf she will wear at her wedding. By washing the headscarf, she is metaphorically washing her hands of her suitor. This cleansing imagery is further reinforced by the use of the *fades* bush (Latin: *pistacia lentiscus*), the ashes of which are used in the Rif to make soap. Although a woman hangs her clothing to dry within or near her house, a *fades* bush would normally be located away from the house, in full public view. Thus, the singer poetically hangs the cleansed wedding scarf in a conspicuous location, announcing within the poem both her rejection of the suitor and her desire that this rejection be known by the community. Since most members of a wedding audience are aware of any current negotiations for a wedding, the singer, without naming names, is still able to reject publicly a specific suitor before the entire *dchar.*

Most of the songs we have recorded do not entail the complexity of the *fades* bush lyric, which was regarded as a subtle example of the genre, each element contributing to an overall effect. It was, in fact, not a song that had been sung at any wedding we attended but rather one that had passed into the corpus of remembered lyrics from past seasons. Most of the lyrics are fairly straightforward, their composers seeking to get their points across while staying within the allotted syllabic count and following the rhyme scheme of the couplets. The following song is, thus, somewhat more typical:

math zwed *el vino* nhara methumnat
math zwed *el vino* math kul bid tazeyat?

Did you drink wine today or yesterday?
Did you drink wine glass by glass or the whole bottle at once?

The effect sought here is obvious, especially in a Muslim society in which drinking wine is proscribed. The singer contends that her suitor must be drunk and that only if he had consumed a great deal

of wine would he have the temerity to consider marrying the singer. The use of wine as an indicator of the boy's madness has the additional value of suggesting that the young man drinks spirits and is therefore, by Rifi standards, an unacceptable mate. The overall effect of the lyric is not only to criticize the young man but, by extension, his family's reputation. Its aim is to discourage the suitor or his father.

In the corpus of *izran* that Hart collected in 1954–55 there is an unusual rejection song, which is an odd mixture of Berber and Spanish (1976: 479):

Abiddagh gi-dhawarth innai no poder
Porque no poder, entonces no saber.

He came to the door, and told me he could not,
Because he could not, this means he does not
know how.

The use of *dhawarth* has a double meaning in the *izri*. At a literal level it is the threshold of the house. However, entering the *dhawarth* (a female noun) also represents sexual penetration. The obvious expression of scorn for sexual inadequacy in the song is not outside the canon of proper Rifi lyrics, which often are erotically explicit. Many songs also contain loan words from Spanish, Moroccan Arabic, and French, used to indicate the sophistication of the composer. What is peculiar about this song is its extensive use of Spanish, which we did not encounter in any of the songs we collected. The point of the song and its tone, however, are in keeping with those usually employed by women rejecting suitors in their lyrics.

Not all of the songs of rejection are addressed to specific males; some are general critiques that comment on the problems of matchmaking and love. The following lyric incorporates one of the recent features of Rifi life—emigration—into its subject matter:

Afer runil ekanit nesar hand g-kesan
Ay Alemania nesfishan emsan.

A piece of packing cord has sullied a water glass.
Oh, Germany. You have given illusions to beggars.

In the mid-sixties many Western European countries, including Germany, were recruiting laborers from Morocco and a sizable number of Rifi workmen had gone abroad, some working a few years and then returning to the Rif. Although their pay was ex-

tremely low by European standards, they were able to live inexpensively, save part of their wages, and return to the Rif with considerable amounts of cash by local standards. Usually the migrants were of poor families and low social standing, but, because they now had money, they were able to move up the social hierarchy. The singer, however, compares these men to the packing cords which are used to wrap the fragile and expensive water glasses which are imported into the Rif. By praising the glass, the singer praises a Western import, something associated with a country like Germany. On the other hand, the lovely object from Germany is sullied; as the packing cord has cheapened and dirtied the water glass, so too has factory work abroad "given illusions to beggars." An ambivalent attitude toward the world outside the Rif is a motif which runs through several of these lyrics.

The following song is a more traditional complaint against the magical charms, which are used to entice a girl to fall in love with a certain man. Love charms and spells, obtained from male religious specialists (*fqih* or *tulba*) or female sorcerers (*dhazuhrith*), are employed quite commonly by both Rifi men and women. The following lyric specifically deals with the magic of *tulba,* who are specialists in writing charms derived from the Qur'an:

Keld act-tem zeta ofir tulba monen
Ogtha athayaren ispohelen

Cast no spells upon me, students of the Qur'an
Don't drive me mad with love.

The singing of such a song in public is thought to work as a counterspell to this sort of magic. Another song which deals with the dangers of witchcraft on a more personalized basis is the following:

A'rala the thas siretheno er-kus si bebe
If kus sed arrenda n-turt saneen amone

My friend made me an evening gown. . .
She also destroyed a love of three years' duration.

In this lyric the singer recounts how her friend made her a *bebe,* an expensive long silk gown, presumably in preparation for the girl's marriage. Implicit in the song is that the false friend worked magic against the composer, probably by taking a piece of the gown and having a *fqih* write a charm destroying the girl's engagement. As we noted in our discussion of Aliya's gown in chapter three, magic

utilizing a piece of the wedding gown of the victim is an accepted convention for disrupting a marriage.

The last song is interesting also because it illustrates the fact that, although many of the lyrics sung by females are oppositional toward males, the *dhiwzirin* may also have agonistic relationships with other women, especially since young women are often rivals for the same man. This rivalry can, however, become a more generalized matter, pitting the girls of the groom's *dhiwzirin* against those of the bride's. Hart quotes an *izri* to this effect, one which is surprisingly explicit and candid in its evaluation of rival females (1976: 479; bracketed comment the authors'; parenthetical comment Hart's):

Dhibrighin n-Bulma agwant stta-stta
Atshakuri-insend dh- 'Amar n-Bahida.

The girls of Bulma [a *dchar* in Aith Waryaghar] came
down six by six
Their representative ("pimp") is 'Amar n- Bahida.

Hart does not furnish any data about the location of the *dhamghra* where this particular song was sung, but one can infer that it was located somewhere in the vicinity of the Wednesday market in Arba Turirt since, according to Hart, the "pimp" in question was a local blacksmith at this market. The rivals of the Bulma girls are, of course, claiming that Bulma produces prostitutes, guarded over by a notorious fellow of low social standing. From the explicit nature of this lyric, one must presume that the contractual bases of this particular marriage were problematic and uneasy.

In another song this agonistic relationship between the *dhiwzirin* as representatives of rival sides is expressed in a more muted manner:

Memsah memsah l-hare mensakum yoh wedah
Nishnen descren nused ansarah

Good evening, good evening, to all of you here
We are the partridges who have come from afar.

The poet here identifies herself as friend and protector of the bride. By mentioning that the singer has come from afar, the lyric establishes that the bride is not from the local *dchar* and possibly not even from the tribe. By repeating "good evening" in Moroccan Arabic

(*memsah l-hare*) the singer stresses the elegance of her expression, further reinforced by the use of the partridge metaphor, which points out the splendor of the dress worn by the visitors, a further index of the bride's social standing. We know that this is being sung by a member of the bride's retinue since the other girls performing at the wedding would be local females attached to the groom's family, just as the girls from Bulma in the previous song probably represented the bride's group and the singer the groom's. In the "partridge" song the poet is suggesting that the bride is a person of position and influence in her own *dchar* and that her *dhiwzirin* is made up of young women of education and cultural attainment. The poet thus warns the community into which the bride marries that the bride is not without powerful and interested supporters if she is mistreated in her new home.

Not all of the songs are rejections or critiques; many of them are sent as signals to attract the attention of a certain male or to complain about a lover whose ardor has cooled or who has departed. Lyrics of this sort are means of communicating the poet's desires and passions, while they may also function to counter malicious rumor. In the following song the poet makes a pun on the terms for divorce and marriage contracts:

it-tabit wureno a ge-kuz wahyomen
uk-sah thabrateno near u-saheremen

My heart is in love with you, my doubter,
Either give my heart its divorce or swear
a contract of marriage.

In this song the lover is portrayed as either doubting the singer's intentions or her fidelity; she asserts both by asking him to marry her. She undercuts the aggressiveness of her stance by the use of humor, saying it is her heart which must either be granted a divorce or an oath of marriage. Although divorce exists only for married people, the girl uses it as a metaphor for her freedom juxtaposed to her real desire, which is for a formal offer of marriage. In a similar vein the next song attempts to resolve a problematic courtship:

A- bida ge-dhawarth ene-ad akan
Ene-ad i-ya kun dar nid-jiz o-merekan

I come on foot to your doorway. You ask what I want.
Haven't you said I am sweeter than fragrant almonds?

In this song the poet is asking a young man to define their relationship: after encouraging her by flattery with some sexual overtones in the almond metaphor, he receives her coldly when she visits his house. *Dhawarth* has several meanings here besides a literal "doorway." It stands for any physical encounter in which one party is being shut out. The term also has specific applications to marriage since the bride enters her new house through the threshold. As mentioned above, the word also has explicit sexual connotations. In this lyric, the girl has visited the young man to continue a liaison; instead of welcoming, he rebuffs her. Her complaint is aimed at forcing him to declare himself one way or the other.

On occasion, the singer knows what has gone wrong with a proposed liaison and seeks to correct it, whether the cause be witchcraft or slander. As we pointed out in chapter three, a woman's value on the marriage market rises and falls according to her reputation. Since many attacks on reputation are discreetly hidden, they are difficult to challenge. The following *izri* is an attempt to counter such slander:

Nanis eguma wutchma anrret a-hisen
Anri ahzezebo huma urensen

The boys have challenged my brother: "It would be better
to kill that wanton your sister."
Then let them kill me to silence their lying tongues.

Here, the young woman publicly announces that she has learned that a group of men has questioned her honor. Since they have approached her brother, we may assume that they are his age mates rather than older men. The allegation has been of such a serious nature that the homicide of a sister would be in order, according to the moral code of the Rif, and the brother has been urged to protect the honor of his family by slaying the girl. Since the only person that could have told her of the threat is her own brother, she is able in the lyrics to note that he must believe in her innocence. By openly confronting the dangerous gossip, she not only brings the slander to the entire *dchar*'s attention but is also able to demonstrate that she is willing to fight for her reputation and is probably innocent of the accusations. Another *izri* with similar overtones, in which the personal defense of reputation is seen as a function of the poetry, is:

Suneth izranino ashar riz-bubenik
Mirme gar thar-ruth wuh ah-wuth u wa sherenik

Fill your ears and your heart with my songs!
Tell my denouncer he lies.

In both cases the lyrics are examples of the polemic passions which run through Rifi life, where reputation is not a matter of absolute presence or absence but rather a constantly fluctuating quality, always conditional and always capable of rising or falling. Both honor and shame have differential qualities, and the lyrics are but one means that young girls can turn to, shaping and defending their own honor, just as they can use the lyrics to attack the honor of others.

Given the volatile nature of interpersonal relations, many of the affairs between young men and women go awry, as witnessed by a song quoted by Hart (1976: 479):

Ahsib allif ahsab, azzugwa min timnum
'Amain darida, 'am u-nuss di-fuyun.

When we are in love, the sequence is as follows:
two years of love and one and a half years of quarreling (Sp. follón).

One of the more interesting aspects of this lyric is the indication it gives of the time span that a young unmarried couple may spend in courtship. While it is impossible to tell (on the basis of the song) whether or not the affair has ended, the lyrics suggest that some sort of relationship has been maintained for three and a half years, with the later period consisting of quarrels. Certainly there is nothing in this song, or most of the *izran,* to suggest that bride and groom encounter each other for the first time at the *dhamghra.*

Another lyric with a similar complaint, which we collected ten years after Hart's, depicts a romance that has ended:

Ehuwhad sirahwe it-tibi ethether-car
Wamethigeth *novia* eme zah-gre thun then-car

The Sirahwe bus disappeared down the hill; a second followed.
When you found a new sweetheart, why didn't you tell me?

The use of the local bus company as a metaphor has become standard in Rifi poetry, demonstrating the willingness of the young women to incorporate new material into their songs. The construction of this lyric is interesting in that the poet uses the Arabic name for the bus company, whereas songs from the earlier period of the protectorate usually used the Spanish name for the company: Valenciana. On the other hand, the poet uses the Spanish word *novia* for sweetheart, in place of the Berber term, *allif-ino*. The poet claims that, just as any two of the bright red Sidrahwe buses look alike, so is she similar to the woman for whom her fiancé has abandoned her. When she asks him why he did not confess that he had stopped caring for her, she is not only requesting an explanation but implying that she should have been informed of her freedom so that she could consider other young men. The fiancé has been derelict in releasing the poet from her obligations to him; her song informs the young men of the *dchar* that she is again available for courtship.

Another song treating the poet as the rejected lover is set in the market place:

Nish athsak r-suk urarye then bohazeh
Adth sualmah granieth m-shal mezethidjah

I shall go to the market although there is nothing I need.
I shall pose the question: "The illusions of love,
What are they worth?"

In the opening line the poet makes a rather curious statement: she intends to go to the market (*suq*), although she has nothing to buy; more importantly, she plans to attend the market, although she is obviously an unmarried girl. Since the market is an all-male affair, only attended by a few old women past the age of childbearing, the poet is suggesting that she is so disenchanted by life that she is unwilling or unable to participate in the ordinary expectations of Rifi female modesty. The second line, however, gives the word "*suq*" a double meaning, for the singer is asserting that she no longer knows her own worth; since she no longer knows what her illusions are worth, she might as well test the value of love in the marketplace where things are bought and sold. The power of this song which, like the *tasebnath* lyric cited above, has become a perennial favorite recited long after its invention, is that it economi-

cally in twenty-four or so syllables sketches in an entire story. The first line is a statement of fact, although unusual (since young women rarely go to the market); the pattern of the poem as a whole is one of delayed revelation, since not until the second line does the poet explain her emotional situation, while, at the same time, referring back to the first line to make a double use of the idea of market. Since the length of the lyric must be quite short by convention, the task of the poet is to triumph over her form, conveying as much information, some of it elliptical by necessity, as she possibly can in a brief couplet. This pattern of delayed revelation is standard, present in varying degrees of accomplishment in most *izran:* the first line states a fact but also sets up a riddle for the audience; the second line resolves the riddle and explains the singer's feelings.

A song with some of the same patterning was recorded by Hart in 1954–55 (1976: 479):

A Bu Garru ya raghair arkiyadh gi-fus,
Asthikhbar-inex arridhar dh-susus

I burned my finger with a cigarette,
and am left thin as a result of your love.

Again, in this song, the first line is about everyday reality but poses a riddle of why a young girl should be smoking a cigarette, behavior which is extremely uncommon in the Rif. The second line reveals, however, that the cigarette is a metaphor for the girl's love. In addition there is an implicit suggestion in the song of sexual relations. Although we never encountered a linkage between cigarette and phallus, there was an explicit linkage between candles and phallus. Since both candles and cigarettes are long and burn at one end, it is quite likely that the singer transposed a common sexual metaphor to a less common one. Such an interpretation is consistent with the context of the rest of the song.

Sometimes the lament is of a more general nature, as we witnessed in the previous chapter in the verse "I have no songs." The *izran* sung at the weddings are not only occasions to encourage or discourage specific suitors but to alert young men in general that a girl wishes to become married, as the following lyric indicates:

Eh-ham rid gazar nunkor swatad er henne
Women gabridan saad enesh ma tuniye

River Nekor has risen, bring tea and henna;
When luck was divided among us, I alone was forgotten.

The singer associates a year of abundant rainfall ("River Nekor has risen") with plant fertility and prosperity. Both of the two items which she selects to convey this abundance are associated with the *dhamghra:* mint tea, which is offered to the wedding guests, and henna, which is applied ceremonially during the first two days of the wedding. However, there are also erotic overtones since drinking tea together can also represent sexual intercourse (see below, the *izri* "Little Girl at the Gate," composed by *imdhyazen*). Tea is prepared with *nana* from the mint garden, which is another commonplace metaphor for female genitalia. Henna also is explicitly associated with sexual potency and fertility (see previous chapter). The singer thus opens her lyric with the commonplace image of the local river bringing prosperity. But by moving in the second line to her own sexual plight, she gives the lyric an unexpected twist while at the same time suggesting that she too is "ripe" for love.

A song which reverses this situation to celebrate satisfied love was recorded by Hart (1976: 479):

Ikhashshad g-unibdu, ikhashindi ibihithen,
Ikhashshad usinnidh ux-ufudh ifutikhen.

The summer has come, and love along with it,
I have been able to lie down at the knee of my sweetheart.

Again the song has erotic overtones, but in this case the composer, rather than seeking love, asserts that she has found her beloved. There are many songs of this positive sort, but, before we turn to them, we would like to review some of the other songs of sorrow and regret.

Lyrics that have to do with the problem of love, such as the "cast no spells," "burned my finger," and "I shall go to the market," are all indexes of the problems of romantic and occasionally erotic love. They are part of a *Geist* which appears deeply implanted in the lives of young Rifi women. Not all of them, however, are negative. If the poetic discourse of the Rifi girls is polemic, it does not always constitute a critique of relationships. The following poem is composed by a girl who is worried not about the trustworthiness of her sweetheart but about his health:

Aruzeth thashem u-ratsh rama athres unor
Meshem ethrihid rerhrek manish threakuwor

Oh, white turban. My spirit make him well.
He suffers but disease, I the yearning of the heart.

The poet is here in sympathy with her sweetheart, using the trope of synecdoche ("white turban") to stand for the male who is ill. In the first line she prays that her own spirit can heal his sickness. In the next line she makes a distinction between the man's ailment, a physical distress, and her own, the passion of love which can also cause a sickness. The "disease" of love may be powerful enough to kill, as in the following song where the speaker refers to her own death:

Nish mara motha amthere mi-g-lbhar
Mirme myena huwar lefe de-fukar

When I die, my tomb must be the sea;
At the sound of each wave my darling will think of his love.

Many of the *izran* recorded by both Hart in the mid-fifties and ourselves in the mid-sixties have to do with girls lamenting the absence of their fiancés, the noticeable difference being that in the earlier songs the absent boys are in Algeria or other parts of Morocco whereas in the later they have migrated to Europe. Perhaps because these laments do not deal with crucial issues of rejection or treachery, they lack some of the poetic strength of other motifs, but, by reminding the young men of the *dchar* of the girls' faithful attachment to absent fiancés, they are as useful to their composers as polemic *izran* would be in other situations:

Alamanya maneth jahmane
Ura-wuth mashina ur-rah thet seh thrahune.

Germany. Where has my young man gone?
The train doesn't arrive there; the bus can't reach it.

The singer here uses trains and buses to convey her inability to locate this strange new land where her fiancé has moved. She uses the vehicles, which ironically cannot cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach Germany, to express her loneliness and her sense of the vast distance that separates the couple, even as she reaffirms her love

for the boy. Were her sweetheart nearer, she could have used a similar bus metaphor as a means of conveying her love, as witnessed by a lyric recorded by Hart (1976: 479):

A Valinsiyana aya r-'amar-inu,
Suyudhas agharrabu nisradh allif-inu.

Oh Valenciana (name of the Spanish Protectorate bus line),
oh my soul,
Please send a boatload of regrets to my sweetheart (working
in Algeria).
[Parentheses in Hart's translation.]

Songs such as these not only lament the absence of a lover but also inform the *dchar* that the girl has some special arrangement with a young man and is not interested in matrimony. Although Hart has noted that migration has occurred for a number of years in the Rif, songs treating it as a subject often have the highest frequency of foreign loan words, suggesting that, at least as a lyric form, they may be a more recent phenomenon. Another possible interpretation is that girls who become interested in men who migrate temporarily out of the area may themselves be more adventuresome and more likely to adorn their lyrics with innovative language.

Lef-ino e-sahwar ge-fotographia
Ah-wer or-resewer afefraz-a-nita

His face in the window of the photographer's shop:
The portrait can't speak, but how it resembles my darling.

The speaker sees a photograph, either of her fiancé or someone who strongly reminds her of him. The only place that such a display might literally take place would be in one of the several photography shop windows in the port town of Alhucemas. The singer displays a certain sophistication not only in the use of the word "photograph" but in the clear implication that she has recently visited a provincial capital, a fairly rare occurrence for most country girls. Such displays of sophistication might bring favorable comment from other young girls, but the *izri* itself seems by standards of the West (with its long tradition of pictorial art) mundane, based as it is on the cliché of the resemblance between a photograph and the loved one's face. The song is admired in the Rif, however, where

photographs are still rare and no tradition of portrait painting exists.

Hart recorded a number of similar songs of which the following are representative examples (1976: 479):

Ofisina Ujdir r-bandira lo laso
Amarzu khi-thuthi allif y yo paso.

The office (Sp. *oficina,* "bureau") of Ajdir has a flag with a knot
My sweetheart (a *mkhazni*) [native auxiliary] is there on duty and cannot see me.

[parenthetical statements Hart's; bracketed comment the authors'.]

Abridh n-tumubil arra Tanja dhihad
Akhdim allif akhdim arrumdhuru wahid

The main road to Tangier stops there,
There my sweetheart works and in summer he will return to marry me.

A Rbbi, maghar ur iddjigh, dhi-trifu gi r-Mirwith
Huma dhisawara ghar allif inith

Oh Lord (God), I want to telephone to the Mulwiya
So that I can speak personally to my sweetheart (who is working in Algeria).

Aside from the fact that these songs evoke distant places, modern means of transportation and communication, and that they utilize a higher frequency of loan words than most of the *izran,* they are relatively simplistic and commonplace. There is a certain lack of passion to them, possibly because they lack the polemic quality of the better *izran.* If we turn to a more problematic field, the songs that encourage passions, the richness and tension of the *izran* once again assert themselves, as in the following lyric:

Ath-sarsh temese hokakmom owahnu
Athadosun waman athaso lef-inu athesu

I shall lower a candle at the mouth of the well
If the water rushes upwards, my lover will drink.

In the opening line of this verse the singer denotes her involvement

in a commonplace activity of fetching water at the well. The reference to the candle, however, suggests a riddle; she is at the well at night rather than at the usual time during the day. This rather extraordinary reality is transformed in the second line to the realm of the supernatural, where water rushes upward as if it were a fountain. At one level the song can be read as one in which her young man is so precious that only a reversal of reality is worthy of him. We have already noted, however, that both candle and well have specific erotic overtones, with well being an explicit sexual metaphor for vagina and candle for penis. Furthermore, the act of drinking (water, tea, etc.) often represents sexual intercourse.

Lyrics in which the erotic motif is disguised in everyday objects are quite common. By incorporating sexual passions within a system of metaphors, the singers can encourage courtships while at the same time remaining within the limits of Rifi propriety:

Nish tha-lif-ino nu-sed n-kuss n-kuss
Amrkaz uwahta ur-re-adder o-sin-kus

My love and I are the same, the same
Filled with love, like a glass of mint tea overflowing.

In this song, the poet celebrates her happiness by comparing the way she and her fiancé overbrim with love to an overflowing glass of mint tea. The image of the glass of tea, however, conveys several meanings to the audience: it suggests the tea ceremony when the young man or his representative came to ask for her hand and present the *zattat* gift of sugar cones. In this meaning she is reversing the procedure of the song "take your sugar away." Furthermore, mint tea is an accoutrement of wedding celebrations and suggests an anticipation of her own wedding. But finally, the glass of tea anticipates sexual intercourse. This economy of language is a much admired device revealing the poet's ability to say a number of things within a rather constricted form. This song was also admired for its repetition of "the same, the same" as a linguistic representation of the similitude of emotion felt by the young man and the woman.

In the corpus of *izran* collected by Hart we find a similar lyric (1976: 479):

Ithnain ibridhen dhimsaggen aw-anu,
Ijj thawighanni, ijjin dh-allif-inu.

Two paths join together at the well,
One comes from me, the girl, and one from my sweetheart.

The use of sexual metaphors by women and around other women is quite commonplace in the Rif. What is unusual about the *izran* metaphors is that they are sung by women in front of men. The propriety and decorum which characterize relationships between males and females are suspended, just as the sexual identification of the singers is temporarily suspended. Mirroring this suspension are the erotic songs sung by the *imdhyazen,* the boys dressed up like girls who also perform at the ceremony. Although most males of any *dchar* know a number of erotic songs that they have heard at previous weddings and memorized, no male member of the *dchar* would sing such songs in front of the females of the local community. On the other hand, the foreign male *imdhyazen* can and do perform such songs. Because they are professionals, singing and dancing at a number of weddings, these performers, unlike the *dhiwzirin,* build up a repertoire of impersonal songs that they use over and over, improving on the form and content. The songs sung by men at the wedding are thus, on the whole, more polished lyrics although they too are limited by the same rhymed two-stanza form used by the *dhiwzirin*. The following *izran* were all performed by *imdhyazen* during the years 1954–55 and recorded by Hart (1976: all *izran* from p. 480):

Dhahanjirth tamzzyand ay azikkur n-udhir,
Antim'asha si-ddjirth, antimsa s-usir

Little girl like a bunch of grapes from a vine
Let us get together at night for dinner and each to his work during the day.

Again in this song we have the metaphoric association of the girl with a particular plant (grapes, pomegranate, mint, etc.); in this case the imagery of the grapevine reasserts an explicit element within the marriage ceremony, the *qubbth*. The sexual elements are reinforced in the second line by the male singer and his beloved coming together to have a meal at night, or sexual intercourse. Similarly explicit in its erotic overtones is the following lyric:

Tumubil tazzugwakth ahannss sinyayi
A dhibhirth ni-na'na' i khatt sdh-adhayi

Oh red bus, let me get up
I will get off at the garden of mint.

The first line seemingly indicates that the male singer is going for a ride on a bus; but the second line places the events in a sexual context from which the first line can be reinterpreted as an erection. The garden of mint refers to female genitalia.

The use of mint, mint tea, drinking, and eating are all poetic devices for sexual encounters, as the following song makes fairly explicit:

Dhahanjirth tamzzyand gi dhawarth n-barra
Qamad ijj ubarrad azdhadh ansu marra.

Little girl at the outside gate (of the house)
Fix a pot of tea and we will drink it together.

Because *dhawarth* stands for both an entrance to the house as well as the entrance to the girl's vagina, the first line of this *izri* has both an everyday meaning and a sexual one. The latter meaning is reinforced, again with non-erotic objects which carry sexual meaning in the second line. In the following song, tea serves the same metaphoric function, only in this case as an unconsumed drink and hence an unconsummated sexual encounter:

Abarrad w-atay assasukhth itsimmidh,
Dhahanjirth tamzzyand thijidda gi-simmidh

A tea tray has been set out only to get cold,
A young girl has let me down in the cold.

Not all of the *izran* sung by the *imdhyazen* are erotic; some are mockingly aimed at the *dhiwzirin,* with whom the males are, as performers, in competition. In the following song, the singer notes that his "gift" was not to be taken seriously, as the receiver obviously did:

Afundra ni-sh-sharq suwar udhaghs isirman,
Nish ta'yar akidh-im, shim dhinni ti-yimmam!

A scarf from Algeria (lit. "from the east") with pictures
of fish on it (as a gift),
I am only playing with you, and you go and tell your
mother.

The singer states that the girl has taken his gift too seriously by informing her mother. The lyrics also suggest that both young men and women engage in a certain amount of flirtation, a point raised in many of the songs.

The young girls also have a form of response to masculine taunts by taking on a male voice in their songs. By assuming a male role, the composer is able to speak not only for women, but also to present the attitudes and postures of men. The following lyric collected by the authors is sung as though by a male and incorporates a reference to the recent innovation of wearing dark glasses at the *dhamghra:*

Kis nwar thar-n-we iya duru fahwen
Hamdu thaskaran turit ge-thetowen

Take off your dark glasses; don't deprive me
Of a glimpse of those beautiful eyes.

In this song the singer mocks the male audience, as she sings of the beauty of the *dhiwzirin* and the inability of the audience to see that beauty. The poetic voice in the lyric is not the singer but her audience. At the same time the lyric is a meta-comment about the entire masking procedure. Although the girls are "masked," the dark glasses serve only as fictive masks, not preserving anonymity—which would mean the loss of the point of many of the songs—but rather seductively hiding female charms. This disguising or camouflaging motif is present in other songs such as the following in which the singer reverts to her own voice as she enumerates her charms:

Wala mathak-e-nir menrarer thuggwazen
Ebash-ino thetfah mazwa thatubsen

By God I swear I shall not tell all that I hide
  beneath my gown;
Breasts hard and round as apples and under them, a bowl.

The use of a male voice by the female singers is less common than their singing from their own point of view, but it does give them an opportunity to place acts and words in the male voice. The following song is sung by a girl as though she were the male singing to his beloved. Its meaning, however, is somewhat ambiguous:

Nish mara motha andar-ino ye-arraza
Rif-kin th-ikfinenem a la zeza

When I die, my burial site is prepared;
My shroud will be your ikfin, oh my beautiful one.

The *ikfin,* a long, transparent gown, is worn over an opaque dress and is reserved for special occasions when a woman wishes to be especially attractive. The speaker in this song is the poet's fiancé, who claims that he wishes to be wrapped in her *ikfin,* instead of the traditional white shroud used in the Rif, when he dies. It is unclear from the lyric whether the singer is celebrating the great love that the young man feels for her or whether she is mocking a boy who over-protests his love. The song may in fact satirize a male who has pledged undying love. As with many songs at the wedding, the meaning emerges not from the song itself but the intertextuality of the lyrics with the social context and the identity of the composer. On the surface the song seems to celebrate the unity of the relationship; however, it is entirely possible that the poet's stance in this *izri* is one of irony.

In the following song, which is a mixture of both the male and female voice, the poet's stance is much less ambiguous:

Eni mi shem rahgah a yah denub
Donue gui a lef-ino mani tigguth l'kul i-ktub

"Where shall I put you, my poor little one?"
Put me, my darling, where you put your book.

This *izri* follows the traditional form of posing a riddle in the first line, in this case in the fiancé's voice; the singer answers the riddle in the second line by suggesting that he keep her in his hip pocket where he carries his book, so that she can be with him at all times.

Although many of the *izran* are like the one above in that they are not contentious, the form itself tends to be polemic, stressing the diverse aims of the *dhiwzirin.*

There are, however, two classes of verse in which agonistic polemics are totally absent. The first comprises the verses sung in celebration of the marriage itself, like the henna *izri* sung at the two henna celebrations:

Hanni gai dh-amimun
Rbbi gin dh-imiman

Henna brings good luck
May God grant the pair good luck

[Translated by Hart, 1976: 131]

The *izri* sung in Arabic by the groom's *dhiwzirin* when henna is applied to his hands, is a similar instance:

Bism-illah qaddim Rbbi
Qaddim Muhammad n-Nbi

In the name of God, put our Lord first.
Put Mohammad the Prophet first

[Hart, 1976: 131]

There are also lyrics sung by the male *iwziren* at the groom's henna ceremony. The *subhain er-razik* verses differ from the *izran* in that they are highly stylized, ritually repeated, and in Arabic. Hart and Coon give two different versions of this song, although in each version the first line is the same:

Sabhain r-raziq, Sabhain l-khaliq

Praise be to the Provider, Praise to the Creator

Sabhain l-baqi; Ba'd l-khala 'iq

Praise be to the Everlasting Who will outlast all creatures

[Hart, 1976: 131]

. . . . . .

Sabhain er-ruwak. ardh el-khalaik

Praise to the Tent (Canopy, Heavens). The Earth is
the Creator

[Coon, 1931: 136]

These verses stress the only absolute quality in Rifi life, restating the Berbers' faith in Islam. In these cases the verses transcend the contentious quality of the local community, for it is not possible to carry on a polemic with God.

We observe a similar transcendental quality in the *izran* sung during the "bride of the rain" ceremony, where again the agonistic traits of the community are overshadowed by the larger entity of faith. One *izri* sung at this ceremony is a prayer, since any more contentious form of discourse with God would be impossible.

A-reeth-nai-la Rbbi
ya-sidi, atawah n-shala

Give us, Oh God, Our Lord,
Give us water quickly.

Another rain dance *izri* recorded by Hart (1976: 51) is, again, a supplication:

Allah ghaituh biha,
Sidi Rbbi l-Hbib,
ya khattar wa dhaghya.

May God wet the ground with it,
Oh dear Lord, Give us rain now.

As the last word in the first *izri, n-shala,* indicates, the rainfall depends upon the willingness of God. Unlike the *izran* dealing with human relationships, however, there is no room in these lyrics addressed to God for polemic discourse, agonistic combat, critique, or complaint.

In this chapter we have examined *izran* as part of a larger system of meaning among the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen. Certain lyrics pertaining to divine intervention function as moral expressions of the absolute quality of man's relationship to God. The vast majority of *izran,* however, are concerned with human relations and can be viewed as expressions of the agonistic potentialities of Rifi culture. These songs can be seen as part of a sign complex related to other kinds of sign systems. The *izran* manifest a modelization process which is translatable into other modes of thought and action.

The *izran* can be viewed as possessing a double function; they are both individual creative acts and part of a system of poetic expression related to a larger network of meaning. While isolated *izran* speak of disparate matters, taken collectively they form an aspect of the total Rifi code of significance. Each poet participates not only in the individual speech act or oral recitation, but also in the collective act. The texts of the *izran* are part of a larger social text, and as a system their latent function as signifiers emerges through their interconnections with ritual, belief, and social organization.

Poetry is a means by which the unmarried girls communicate to the community; it is also a way that the males, through their substitutes, the *imdhyazen,* can respond. But the poems also represent a portion of a wider semiotic frame of reference in which messages of contract and solidarity are constantly interwoven with polemic, agonistic, sentimental, and individualistic messages. None of these message systems is autonomous from the broad cognitive and expressive network which constitutes meaning among the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen.

Mauss in *Essai sur le don* and Lévi-Strauss later in *Les Structures élémentaires de la parente* suggested that kinship relations, linguistic relations, and relations of exchange can be viewed in a particular society as existing on the same order; the exchange of words, women, and material objects can all be regarded as messages through which social groups communicate. In Lévi-Strauss's examination of Amazonian tribes, one type of message seems interchangeable with another as the codes follow fixed and stable patterns. The grammar that governs these kinds of rules of reciprocity appears quite dissimilar in Rifi society, where elemental rules seem to be replaced by rules of complexity. As we have observed, the "circulation" of women is multi-directional and complex; the *izran* lyrics underscore this complexity and reveal the dichotomy between contractual motivations and individualistic strategies. If the exchange of material goods is in any way isomorphic to these patterns, we would expect some elements of the same sort of complexity operating at the level of gift giving and exchange occasioned by the *dhamghra.* We turn now to this question.

SIX

The Semiotic Organization of Exchange

THE UNDERLYING THESIS developed so far in this analysis of Moroccan social structure is that various elements concerned with the organization of social alliances, of symbolic structure, and of aesthetic expression are all interwoven into a coherent whole. Within that whole, different modes of communication stand in opposition or contradistinction to one another. Rather than subscribing to an interpretation that exclusively selects one mode of communication and social organization as being dominant, we have argued that an adequate understanding of the social and symbolic facts requires viewing the various modes in complementary distribution to one another. Thus, the apparent discontinuities of self-interest and social solidarity can be reconciled with minimal analytic difficulty.

In this chapter we wish to explore yet another form of semiotic communication, the exchange of material goods operating within the institutional matrix of marriage. As we have already noted, a great deal of wealth is expended on both the preliminaries of marriage and the wedding ceremony itself. Such acts of reciprocity are more than mere transfers of wealth; they are also cultural exchanges, transmitting messages to the community at large about social relationships between donors and receivers. A commonplace in contemporary anthropology is that the circulation of goods in a status-oriented society is simultaneously a circulation of messages. Since the circulation of gifts also occasions considerable public debate and private gossip, these material messages are accompanied by verbal messages, assisting the community to identify lines of

solidarity as well as division. The structure of reciprocity establishes a grid by which the entire community can identify at any one time the nature of its political structure. At the same time, such acts allow each individual to demonstrate his or her position within that grid.

Acts of reciprocity, however, do more than reveal a political order; they also serve as a means of grasping the perceptual world through which both solidarity and self-interest interpenetrate. We have noted earlier that there is a considerable amount of strategic manipulation in mate selection by the parental generation as well as by potential brides and grooms. The "rules" by which one acquires a mate are purposefully ambiguous, presumably in order to allow for a maximum degree of fluidity. The strategies by which mates are selected are paralleled by acts of reciprocity, in which both donor and receiver attempt to maximize their advantage. Certain categories of gifts such as the *zattat* and the *sdhaq* might be considered negative in the sense that they reflect an agonistic principle of maximizing self-interest. There are other sorts of gifts, *ghramth,* labor assistance, and the pooling of resources, which are balanced in the sense that a person is expected to reciprocate with a gift of the same value. This latter category of gifts reflects the solidarity of alliances and the undervaluation of self-interest. Since both these principles operate simultaneously in other realms of thought and action, it is consistent that they should also operate in the organization of exchange.

The initial exchange in the negotiation for a bride is the *zattat,* a gift that the representative of the groom gives to the father of a potential bride. This gift is given in an attempt to put the girl's father in a receptive mood. The primary symbolic element of the *zattat* is a cone of sugar that a man brings to the home of the man whose daughter he wishes to bargain for. While it is universally accepted etiquette for a host to present sweet mint tea to a guest in the Rif, if the visit is an attempt to initiate negotiations for a bride, the visitor brings a cone of sugar. If the father of the prospective bride is interested in future discussions with this representative, usually the father of a potential groom, he will accept the cone of sugar in order to make the required tea. If, on the other hand, he is uninterested in forming an alliance with the other family or unwilling to allow his daughter to marry at this time, he will reject the "message" and use his own sugar to prepare the tea. Acceptance

of the prestation of sugar is, of course, no guarantee that subsequent negotiations will successfully result in a marriage contract, but it is a clear signal that such overtures will not be refused out of hand. Often this gift has been anticipated by the courtship patterns we have discussed earlier, including the activities of both males and females who have acted as intermediaries to test the possibilities of marriage. The *zattat* is presented only if such initial encounters have met with some success. Although the sugar cone itself is primarily symbolic, a number of other gifts of economic value, including rock salt, tea, chickens, clothing, shoes, and cash, often accompany the cone. Depending on the social rank of the girl's father, the *zattat* can be quite large. In order to enter into negotiations with the ex-*pasha* of Alhucemas, a gift of 3,000 dirhams in cash was not considered unreasonable. The *zattat* does not encumber the recipient with any obligations other than the moral one that he should not accept the gifts unless he is seriously willing to listen to a proposal. Subsequent negotiations can always break down; if they do, the recipient may keep the *zattat,* although, if he forms a pattern of accepting gifts and then failing to enter into serious negotiation over dowry, his reputation will suffer. A man may receive such gifts from an unlimited number of suitors and need not consult his daughter concerning acceptance of the gifts. The *zattat* is, however, quickly public knowledge and alerts the various interested parties to the fact that a girl is being courted. As we witnessed in the analysis of the "*fades* bush" lyric in the preceding chapter, such gifts give a young woman a metaphoric mode for publicly rejecting or encouraging a potential suitor.

The *zattat* is part of a preliminary process of marketing for mates. The bargaining aspect of it resembles the agonistic world of the marketplace where buyers and sellers attempt to strike the most favorable bargain. As such, the bargaining parallels the sort of negotiation which goes on in the market, following a principle that Khuri (1968: 698) has generalized for all market transactions in the Middle East, "Any bargainer, seller or buyer, makes sure not to offend his partner, for this may put an end to bargaining." Obviously, in the courtship market this principle is even stronger because the two parties are potentially entering into a long-term affinal relationship. At some point in these preliminaries, the father of the bride either agrees to a marriage or he disagrees. If he disagrees, negotiations are broken off; if the father accepts the idea of

the marriage in principle, the couple is formally betrothed (*khdnubith*). "The boy's father returns to see the girl's father again after two weeks or so have elapsed, this time bringing much more sugar, a number of loaves of bread, generally some women's clothing, and the meat of a goat (or perhaps of a sheep) that he has sacrificed" (Hart, 1976: 130).

After the betrothal, negotiations between the two families become more formal, entering into contractual agreement concerning types of goods that are to be purchased for the bride's trousseau (*ajhaj*), as well as the ceremonial expenses that are to be paid by the groom's father. The first of these expenses, *sdhaq,* is the Berber-equivalent of the *mahr* payment among Arabs. This custom has often been glossed as bride-price or bridewealth, although technically it is neither. The *sdhaq* is money given by the family (usually the father) of the groom to the father of the bride who, in effect, turns it over to his daughter. Goody (1973: 2) has more correctly labeled this gift "indirect dowry." The transaction is not between the kin of the groom and the kin of the bride as in the bridewealth; rather it is a gift made by the groom's family to the bride herself. The bride's father uses the money to make specified purchases entailed in the contract for the trousseau. Although men occasionally keep a portion of the *sdhaq* for their personal use (Westermarck, 1914: 72), such an act is never stipulated in a marriage contract nor condoned by custom and is frowned upon by the community (Hart, 1976: 129). *Sdhaq* in the majority of cases goes for the acquisition of objects for the bride.

The amount of *sdhaq* varies considerably according to the social position of the families involved. Hart (1976: 170) calculated the range for the Aith Waryaghar in the mid-1950s as between $50 and $125. By the mid-1960s it had increased to between $100 and $300 (cf. Hart, 1976: 128). Given Waterson's calculation (1962: 4) that the average Moroccan family annually earned about $60 in the early 1960s (1962: 4), these expenses represent considerable cash outlays for the Berbers.

At the same time that the two sides bargain over the amount of *sdhaq,* they also negotiate the exact amount of ceremonial expenses for the *dhamghra*. Celebrations lasting several days at the homes of both the bride and the groom must be paid for in cash or kind by the father of the groom (Westermarck, 1914: 78–79). The amount of bulls, sheep, goats, chickens, barley, wheat, sugar, tea, and cook-

ing oil is all negotiated beforehand. A rather modest *dhamghra* would have expenses of the following proportions:

Quantity	*Cost (in dirhams)*
10 kilos of sugar	20
8 liters of oil	25
3 goats	120
100 kilos of potatoes	40
100 kilos of barley	35
25 kilos of wheat	15
½ kilo of tea	5
TOTAL	260

These expenses are in addition to the *sdhaq,* which is used to provide a wedding chest (*asunduq*), dresses, shoes, furniture, and rugs for the bride.

All these negotiations take place between the two fathers or their emissaries. After both sides have agreed upon the amount of wealth to be provided, a date is set when the wedding contract can be formalized and witnessed. The father of the bride hosts a party to which the male relatives of the groom's family are invited. Usually the guests bring additional gifts of lamb, bread, sugar, and tea. A formal request for the girl is made on this occasion. After the meal has been served, the guests and host go through a prescribed formula, the groom's spokesman asking, "Do you know why we have come?" The host replies, "Yes, you have come as my guests." The spokesman states, "No, we have come to ask for your daughter."

At this time the marriage document (*r-kighadh n-z-zujiya*) is drawn up. Although the amount has been agreed upon in substance, this is a final opportunity to negotiate and haggle over details. The motivation in all this bargaining is to strike the most advantageous terms. Often partisans of one side or the other will feel that their side is being taken advantage of and will argue for a raising or lowering of certain items. In this final bargaining session, there is little room for negotiation, since presumably the parties have evolved a consensus over most of the details in earlier meetings. The final agreement is witnessed and given religious and magical authority by the presence of a religious notable (*fqih*), who writes out each item when it has finally been established.

The *fqih,* as a religious and magical specialist, serves as a media-

tor between the two parties, investing the proceeding with both the authority of the Qur'an and of his own powers. Once the final sum has been settled and each item agreed upon, the *fqih* draws up the marriage contract. Such contracts are usually adorned with messages from the Qur'an, so that the document becomes a blend of the moral and the material. The blurring of distinctions between morality and taking optimum advantage of the market value of women as brides is one of the central cultural features not only of the tribes under discussion but of the Middle East in general. The primary purpose of arranging a marriage is very rarely for the short-term advantages of obtaining a financial profit, although obviously each party is aware of the economic aspects of marriage. As Hart (1976: 159) notes, "Girls are always regarded by their fathers . . . as objects of future market value in exchange for a suitable dowry." Yet the presence of the *fqih* indicates the commodities being exchanged also have a moral value, which is embedded in social relationships founded in the transferral of *zattat* and *sdhaq*.

The thrust and counterthrust of marriage negotiations are merely episodes which, if successful, establish durable social relationships that will channel future movements of goods and services entailed by affinal obligations of reciprocity. Thus, while the donor and the recipient of these gifts stand in a potentially agonistic and adversarial relationship to one another, they are at the same time establishing an alliance that integrates various individuals and aggregates into a collective unity. The centripetal imperatives of alliance mitigate the centrifugal tendencies of self-interest bargaining. The character of marriage places restraints upon the negotiators, mediating between their self-interests and the collective good of both parties. Thus, the market value of women is encumbered by the social value of allies, and the price received for a daughter is not necessarily of superior value to the social values that govern relationships between affines.

Once the financial arrangements have been settled, representatives from both families visit the religious judge or *qadi* of Alhucemas or Targuist and present him with the list of obligations the groom's family has accepted. In the meantime the groom's father collects the necessary goods and cash for the *dhamghra* and the *sdhaq*. The amount of time that may pass between the initial agreement and the final completion of the exchanges is not stipulated and may be as long as a year. The preference is, however, to consummate the

matter and the marriage as rapidly as possible. The marriage may take place within a week of the drawing up of the papers and usually occurs within a month of the meeting to draw up the contract.

When all the cash and goods have been collected and exchanged, the two fathers return to the *qadi,* two or three days before the actual wedding ceremony. Once the *qadi* has satisfied himself that all the stipulations have been met, he signs the necessary marriage document. With this paper the couple is legally married according to Shari'a law. However, the wedding is more than a legal transaction; it is also a ritual event demarking a change of status. In order to sanctify the marriage, the *dhamghra* must now take place.

Gifts are also given prior to the *dhamghra* and during the ceremony itself, but they are of a different sort than the ones we have discussed so far, following a different semiotic code. The gifts of *zattat, sdhaq,* and ceremonial expense are all negotiated in a pragmatic and instrumental mode, encumbered by the problematics of initiating new social relationships; the acts of reciprocity we now wish to discuss are based, however, upon previous exchange patterns embedded in existing alliances. These gifts of money, labor, clothing, shoes, and the loan of items such as glasses, cooking utensils, pots, mats, and so forth, are part of an obligatory prestation system rooted in past reciprocal obligations.

For several days prior to the *dhamghra,* both the bride and groom, in company with mates of their own sex, visit the various houses within the community or *dchar.* As they come to each house, the girls enter the inside patio where they sing and dance; the males enter a separate guest room or remain outside. Both groups are offered tea and a small meal. At this time the family head presents the groom with a sum of money or a gift of clothing or new shoes; the size of this gift (*ghramth*) depends on the prominence and wealth of the household, the degree of relatedness between the groom and the donor, and previous gifts bestowed by members of the groom's family to the host. As all these issues vary, the size of the *ghramth* also varies, but the underlying general principle was recognized by Westermarck seventy years ago. The *ghramth* is "really a loan which has to be repaid in the future under corresponding circumstances, or an indemnity for similar contributions in the past; hence the amounts given by the various donors are most carefully taken note of" (1914: 125).

On the two days immediately preceding the arrival of the bride

at the groom's house, festivals are held in both houses. Kinsmen from both the paternal and maternal side of each family are invited to the home of their respective relatives. Patrons, clients, and friends are also invited. Members of the extended, three-generational family go to the home of their immediate kinsmen; but individuals with less intimate ties may go to either festival or, if the distance between the two homes is not great, to both. The largest party is inevitably at the home of the groom. Here the major preparations for the final and most important night of the *dhamghra* occur. The ceremony at the bride's house is financed by the groom's father, who sends over the necessary animals, bread, oil, and so forth as stipulated in the marriage contract. At the bride's house her *dhiwziren* of girlfriends dance and sing in the patio. As we noted in chapter four, at these celebrations the *henna* ceremonies occur, during which the bride's girlfriends and older female relatives give her small cash gifts, also termed *ghramth*. It should be noted that even though the gifts given by females are considerably smaller in size than those given by males, they follow the same principles of reciprocity, establishing social linkages among the women. The primary gifts that women give one another, however, are less in the realm of cash than in labor and the lending of various utensils in order to accommodate the large crowd of wedding guests. Although the male host of the wedding, the groom's father, receives, as we shall note shortly, a considerable amount of *ghramth* in the form of cash, the gifts of labor and other commodities that the various female allies give the groom's mother are of equal importance in the successful conduct of the celebration.

Female guests often supplement the total amount of food provided by the groom's father by bringing freshly baked bread, fresh fruit, and vegetables. They also pool such items as glasses, trays, pots, and mats. These gifts ordinarily come from the older and more established women of the community, tied, as we have suggested, into their own relational network of female allies. Although women have less control over the means of production and hence reciprocate on a smaller scale than men, the code that channels their gifts is basically the same as the one operating among males. Their most significant contribution in quantitative terms is labor, for they are charged with preparing the food and no ceremony would be successful without the work these women contribute. Such gifts of *ghramth*, labor, and the loaning of material are tied to a principle of

community cohesion, although again, like male unity, gift giving is not haphazard but follows well-established patterns of obligation and alliance. One of the customary grounds for a woman to instigate divorce proceedings against her husband is if he deprives her of the right to attend wedding ceremonies of her relatives. In part this is a recognition of the importance such ceremonies play in establishing the social identity of females within the community. If a woman is unable to fulfill such obligations as the *dhamghra* establishes among females, she, in turn, will have difficulties establishing patterns of obligation owed her and hence be unable to fulfill acts of reciprocity. Men who consistently prevent their wives from attending weddings not only restrict their own but also their wives' and, by extension, their children's potential circle of allies.

In the late hours of the final evening of the *dhamghra,* the male guests contribute their ceremonial offerings of *ghramth* (also labeled *dhiwxsi*). After the final meal has been concluded and the unmarried girls have performed their dances, the groom and his *iwziren* enter the middle of the sacred space allotted to the males, walking around the inside of the circle three times. The groom is then given a chair (he is the only person sitting on a stool as befits his symbolic status of *muray* or *sultan*), and his *iwziren* squat on the ground beside him. At all times the groom has the hood of his jellaba pulled over his face to avoid the evil eye. Four young girls, his own personal *dhiwzirin,* stand beside him throughout the ceremony fanning him with their scarves. To one side of the groom is placed a small brass tea tray covered with the bride's headscarf, the *tasebnath*. The female guests remain standing near the house on a raised plane so that they can observe the ceremony.

The male guests (*inibjiwen*) who include the agnatic and uterine kinsmen, affines, and the nonrelated friends and neighbors of the groom's father as well as the groom's own age mates, contribute *ghramth* of cash gifts at this time. The gifts are collected by the wedding crier as described in chapter four, who places the money on the tea tray and announces the donor and the amount given, after which the female guests ululate in the background and the young men beat their drums.

These gifts, which range in size from a few coins to as much as several hundred dollars, are, in the main, presented to the father of the groom, although smaller amounts may be set aside for the groom and the crier. The largest amounts usually come from either

consanguineal or affinal relatives of the groom's father, but every male at the ceremony is expected to make some donation and even the smallest amount symbolically announces the existence of a social relationship. Members of the community or family who do not wish to sustain a relationship simply do not come to the wedding; by withholding *ghramth* they announce publicly that they are disrupting social linkage. The same process also holds true among women, who by not attending the wedding ceremony withhold their labor and thus announce a disinclination to participate in further patterns of reciprocity. In either case, the absent person has sent a message that he or she chooses not to continue in a relationship; that person will not be invited to subsequent ritual ceremonies such as the naming ritual or circumcision of the children of the new couple. Equally, the host and his wife are now free not to attend and not to assist the absent individual in subsequent ceremonies that he or she might hold.

The actual amount of the gift generally reflects the closeness of the alliance between the donor and the father of the groom, although this is not based upon a generalized genealogical pattern. From the standpoint of practical value, the gifts are beneficial to the host in that they assist in defraying his various expenses. The primary semiotic value of *ghramth,* however, is that each gift publicly signals the continuity of relationships to the community. Men make their alliances where they may, and one cannot on *a priori* grounds determine whether any particular category of relationship will be associated with any specific amount of *ghramth*. Since categorical references such as father's brother or mother's brother do not automatically signal the quality of relationship in any particular case, the giving of *ghramth* is an especially useful index of any one person's alliance system.

In any case, the amount of *ghramth* is carefully recorded and there are few surprises, since most gifts are based upon reciprocal obligations established prior to any particular *dhamghra*. It is rare for an individual to attend a wedding celebration and give a *ghramth* of lesser amount than is expected. Although it is within the system of protocol to break an alliance and not attend the ceremony, it is considered especially shameful to receive a man's hospitality and then refuse to honor one's obligations. If a man is unable to meet his obligations, he is expected to borrow from his relatives or other allies. If for reasons of illness or commitment elsewhere, one cannot

attend the *dhamghra* but owes a reciprocal *ghramth* to the host, one is expected to send a representative with the gift. In all cases the giving of the obligatory prestation is underwritten by a moral code which is rooted in status relationships and encodes the sentiments of social solidarity.

There are, of course, instances of breaking the moral code and of sending an inappropriate message. Men do occasionally renege on their obligations, and the main sanction against such acts is moral disapprobation. Since a great deal of social identity stems from maintaining one's honor, this can be a serious sanction. On the other hand, in a polity where alliances are fairly open and fluid, the risk of such moral condemnation can be overemphasized. In a land where the blood feud was once endemic and quarrels are still rampant, the bonds created by morality are often fragile. The possibility of the dissolution of status relationships makes the wedding ceremony all the more important since the offerings of *ghramth* are in essence a test of the solidarity of that moral commitment between individuals.

With the advent of capitalistic penetration in the form of an external labor market and wage labor, there has been some dissolution of the codes described here. Young men who have acquired capital by migrating either to Europe or other parts of Morocco are no longer quite so dependent upon their parents to finance their marriages. At the same time that a wage market for labor opened, there was a reduction in the value of land, the primary resource that a son might inherit from his father. The combination of these two factors has weakened parental authority by depriving them of the stick with which they could beat a recalcitrant son into line. Fathers wryly joke about their sons surpassing them and note that, if they were younger, they too would go to Europe. There has also been negative reaction to the phenomenon of poor men rising economically above their social status—as witnessed by the lyrics discussed in the previous chapter in which a girl describes how money has "given illusions to beggars."

With the advent of cash labor and the devaluation of land and agricultural work on it, some men have pursued strategems quite independent of their fathers and of the values of the community. As more young men adopt a self-interested entrepreneurial mode of behavior, the phenomenon of collective solidarity and cohesion plays a decreasingly significant role in their lives. One should not

confuse the new capitalistic mode, however, with the higgling and haggling that we have observed in the context of negotiating over problematic relationships as discussed in terms of *zattat* or *sdhaq*. Although on the surface there are some superficial similarities, the two situations are, in fact, quite distinct. The traditional negotiations over dowry or ceremonial expenses are still done within the confines of a status economy in which the amount of money is always secondary to the quality of social relationships being negotiated. Men have always bought and sold things, including land and labor, even prior to the penetration of a capitalistic mode of production; but neither the traditional familial mode of production, the social infrastructure, or the ideology were capitalistic in nature. Moreover, the agonistic nature of bargaining was always complemented by a consistent set of cosmological assumptions, quite alien to the "rationalistic" assumptions of modern capitalism. Increasingly, however, the traditional semiotic code is being challenged by new modes of thought and action.

An example of the erosion of the traditional semiotic system is the case of Muhand, a young man who had married the daughter of 'Amar in the Aith Waryaghar. When 'Amar arranged for one of his sons to be married, Muhand was expected to give a relatively small amount of *ghramth,* as befitted his social status and the fact that he was still quite young and only recently married into 'Amar's family. 'Amar's other daughter had married Yusif some years earlier and the two sons-in-law, Muhand and Yusif, did not get along well. Muhand apparently developed a list of grievances against Yusif and decided to best his rival. Pleading poverty and an inability to pay the appropriate amount of *ghramth,* Muhand visited a number of relatives and borrowed cash from each, claiming he needed it to pay his *ghramth*. These relatives willingly made loans to Muhand, for they believed he was collecting money in order to discharge a moral obligation. The relatives did not know, however, that Muhand was collecting from several different sources, and he was able in this manner to amass a considerable amount of money. Thus, at the *dhamghra,* after 'Amar's other son-in-law, Yusif, had made the appropriate gift of *ghramth,* Muhand made his presentation, which was considerably larger than Yusif's. The gift was announced to the shocked surprise not only of 'Amar and Yusif, but to Muhand's relatives. The money was accepted, although with considerable disdain by 'Amar and with absolute silence from the women who

usually ululate at each gift. The wedding celebration became strained and abbreviated, dispersing early. For several days Muhand stayed in hiding as much from fear of his relatives as from Yusif or 'Amar. Muhand and his relatives fell under a social cloud, and several men said that he would not have dared such an act if he were not planning to leave shortly for a job in Europe.

Muhand's trouble, in large measure, stemmed from his blurring the distinction between two different semiotic codes. In some areas of behavior his agonistic rivalry would be perfectly appropriate, but in the *dhamghra,* governed as it is by a code of cohesion and solidarity, his actions were an affront not only to his rival but also to his father-in-law and to his own relatives who unwittingly assisted him in his attempt to shame Yusif. In effect, Muhand did not accomplish his purpose but rather brought shame on himself and his kinsmen. Such deliberate misuse of the code of social solidarity and reciprocity may occur with greater frequency in the future, owing to the penetration of capitalism in the form of a labor market and wage labor. Only by going to Europe could Muhand acquire sufficient capital to pay back his loans. Since presumably his aim did not include forfeiting on these loans, only the possibility of acquiring enough money to pay back his relatives allowed him to advance his strategem. As we shall discuss below, behavior stemming from the advent of new wealth possibilities and the penetration of capitalistic modes of thought are occurring in the Rif with increased frequency. Although such actions resemble the agonistic mode which we have described as part of traditional social life, they are, in fact, quite distinct from such behavior, have a different set of consequences, and contradict the moral principles upon which the community is built.

Another example of the erosion of traditional practices is the case of Hamid, a young man of the Ibuqquyen, who wished to marry a woman his father disapproved of, although the girl's father Jilali was willing to contract his daughter in marriage to Hamid. Unable to arrange the marriage without his father's assistance, Hamid migrated to Belgium where he worked in a factory for two years. He returned to Iboyyia and successfully concluded negotiations with his fiancée's father, Jilali. Hamid's own father, however, disinherited the young man and refused to allow the wedding ceremony to take place at his home. It was necessary to have the *dhamghra* at Jilali's home, further disturbing the semiotic code. Furthermore, since

most of the senior members of the community felt it was inappropriate for Hamid to publicly disagree with his father, they too stayed away from the ceremony. Although many of Hamid's male age mates and a number of his bride's female friends did attend, the ceremony was symbolically attenuated. Moreover, only a relatively small amount of *ghramth* was collected since this money generally goes to the groom's father, who had withheld his support. Because Hamid had accumulated by Rifi standards a fair amount of capital, he was able to meet the expenses of the wedding on his own and did not need the material support of either his father or of the community at large. The normative ideological ends of group cohesion and parental authority were publicly challenged in this case as the marriage became wholly a contractual affair between Hamid and Jilali. Although the pragmatic and utilitarian aspects of bargaining over *sdhaq* and other expenses in this case resembled what one might expect to find in most Berber marriages, the implementation of transactions, the human agencies involved, and the symbolic mantle that cloaks most marriages had all been altered in favor of practices which, at least at the time, were quite alien to normal expectations. Given the economic superiority of the capitalistic system and the hold it has on many young people's imagination, more marriages will be contracted in this manner, although from both a symbolic and social standpoint such arrangements verge on unintelligibility to many participants in the culture.

The exchanges and acts of reciprocity which take place prior to and during the *dhamghra* are of two general sorts, each one embodying a slightly different sort of communication to the community at large. The kinds of exchanges do not draw their meaning from the size of the amount exchanged but rather from the general kind of information each category of exchange embodies. The exchanges themselves are either cash, labor, or something that can be reduced to a monetary equivalent. The categorical difference does not lie in what is being exchanged but rather in the message that is being emitted. Each exchange is an act of prestation between sender and receiver, but the messages are not quite the same. In one framework the message is one in which the social value of the relationship between sender and receiver is still being negotiated. In the category of exchanges that includes *zattat* and *sdhaq,* the message is still problematic and the relationship has not been stabilized. As we have observed in the arena of mating strategies, in poetry and dance, or

in other realms of experience, the interested parties continue to claim as much in self-interest as is possible. It is here that disputes and disagreements most often occur as both parties move toward defining the quality of a particular social relationship.

Another sort of exchange is based upon patterns of reciprocity already established. Its meaning as a semiotic code derives from references already established either through kinship, neighborliness, friendship, or patronage. This sort of prestation is highly ritualized and much less dependent upon the individual agent and his or her volition. One gives *ghramth* (either of cash, kind, or labor) according to patterns of obligation and duty which have become standardized through previous encounters. Even though, at the level of kinds of commodities, all these gifts look very much of the same sort, in that they are all located in the context of marriage and they are all either cash or social factors like labor that can be conceptually converted into cash, there are obvious and important differences.

Prestations connected with *zattat, sdhaq,* and ceremonial expenses are negotiated between two parties, each calculating maximum advantage. Such calculation is often reduced to a written contract stipulating the amounts that have been haggled for. Each calculation relies on the current market value of women and rests upon no previous exchange. The exchanges are pragmatic, utilitarian, and highly instrumental within the limits prescribed by marketing with partners who will become affines. Exchanges of this sort mirror the kinds of exchanges that take place in the *suq,* where there is also the fusion of sharp business tactics and sentiment.

Exchanges of the other sort, whether they are of cash, labor, or loans, all entail a quite different principle. They are all embedded in status relationships and they are never, in a formal sense, contractual. They are non-negotiable and, although the relationships they express are not without an element of calculation, the prestations are moral tokens, generated by previous events and relationships, underwritten by the code of collective sentiments and social solidarity. That the relationships expressed follow no *a priori* mapping is in large measure due to the fact that solidarity itself is based upon contingencies of the past and present. Although such gifts do not follow any predictable pattern, they nonetheless express a striving for stable, enduring relationships.

Each type of exchange operates from its own special grammar,

codifying the two complementary worlds in which the Aith Waryaghar and the Ibuqquyen live. The centrifugal agonistic world exists simultaneously with a centripetal world of cohesion. Neither has primacy over the other, both are two parts of a single system, conceptual terminals in an ongoing dialectic that both integrates aggregates of people and, at the same time, allows individuals to pursue private interests. Although each individual, within fairly specific boundaries, may maximize his or her advantage, each does so within a social system in which relationships are reasonably stable and coalescence is as significant as divergence. If people live in both a real and conceptual world of violence, misunderstanding, fear, maneuvering, and manipulation, they also experience a world of unity, of family and community solidarity, and of collectivism. If the anthropologist selectively totals up the score card, one tendency might appear more prevalent than the other; in some individual cases the balance is undoubtedly toward one pole or the other. But the society itself appears to have constituted a semiotic system of communication in which the antinomy between each principle is recognized as necessary and reasonable by the quite distinct categories of exchange that operate during the marriage arrangements and rituals. Furthermore, these exchanges are redundantly encoded at the cosmological level. The cultural transmission of information from human marriages reappears in the gifts given at the marriage of the earth bride and the sky.

In chapter four we described the bride of the rain ritual, a custom that semiotically encodes many of the same sorts of messages that occur when humans marry. The marriage of the earth goddess to a sky god results in economic exchanges of a sort that quite closely parallels the gifts discussed in this chapter. Without repeating the details of the rain dance, we wish to focus upon it once more, this time as a system repetitiously encoding some of the messages we have been discussing.

The rain dance occurs when the natural world is out of balance. In the natural course of events rain [semen] from the sky penetrates the earth and causes it to become fertile [pregnant]. In times of drought this natural order becomes disrupted, resulting in a state of jeopardy during which grain [the child of the fertilization] is in short supply for both humans and their animals. The spiritual world is in a state of disharmony. The rain dance is an attempt by the community through a ritual (which in most details parallels the

intent of the *dhamghra* to reunite two different elements in a marriage) to reassert the natural order of the world. Obviously the earth-bride and the sky-groom are metaphors, but these metaphors are coextensive to human marriage and to material exchanges, and thus they indicate that the three realms of humans, spirits, and nature are all interwoven.

In the *dhasrith w-unzar* or "bride of the rain" ceremony the community metaphorically transforms the earth (or female deity) into a "bride," which they symbolically represent by dressing a bread shovel in bride's costume. The "bride" is then carried through the community by her *dhiwzirin* of unmarried girls, stopping off at each house where the girls receive, in the name of the bride, *ghramth* from the women of each house. Although the *ghramth* is symbolically a gift to the spirits, it is also a material commodity, which is divided among the girls who then redistribute it among their families.

At the same time as the "bride" travels through the community, a parallel ceremony is held at the community mosque by the men, who sacrifice a bull to the sky. The sacrificial bull (called *sadaqa*) is a contribution of the males of the community, who each provide a portion of the purchase price. The meat is divided among the men, who redistribute it to their families. Informants tend to separate conceptually the sacrifice of the bull from the "bride of the rain" dance, treating them as distinctly different categories of activity. But the fact that they both occur within the larger context of the rain ceremony and have parallels with the distribution of *ghramth* and *sdhaq,* male exchanges involved in human marriage, suggests that the two activities are not, in fact, separated. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that *sdhaq, sadaqa,* and *asunduq* (the marriage chest) all appear to be etymologically related. That all the men contribute in the purchase of the bull suggests that the community itself is the sponsor of this wedding *dhamghra* of sky and earth. Each family then has a small celebration at its own home, commemorating the mythic wedding of the sky and earth.

One can, of course, explain this celebration as an attempt to redistribute wealth in the community in times of drought. By giving *ghramth* and *sadaqa,* the more prosperous members of the community spread some of their surplus savings to the less prosperous, not in the form of charity or loans but in ritual expenses. Moreover, the sacrifice of a large animal takes that animal out of grazing, which

becomes increasingly expensive during times of drought when feed for animals is in short supply; the meat of the sacrificed animal also provides a good deal of protein to the community.

While all of the above factors are true, they miss the moral point of gift giving. Semiotically, the gifts given in the *dhamghra* of humans and in the "bride of the rain" ceremony are encodings of the same spirit of collective solidarity, brought on at a moment when the potentials for human jeopardy are at their greatest, as humans contend for scarce resources of rain and grain. The giving of gifts obviously redistributes wealth; but it also gives the community a ritual arena in which to symbolize its unity.

In the acts of reciprocity of the "bride of the rain" ceremony, one detects neither the agonistic relationships that we have encountered as part of preliminaries to the *dhamghra* nor the capitalistic impulses that we have noted elsewhere. The reasons for this are obvious. Presumably, no one in the community is in disagreement about the utility of a marriage between the sky and the earth which will result in the sky impregnating the earth and providing fertility. Indeed, the entire symbolic necessity of the ritual is generated by this pragmatic concern. Since presumably the entire human community wants to be in harmonious relationship to the natural marriage of sky and earth, any agonistic attitudes would endanger an individual's reaping of the rewards of the marriage—i.e., the rain. Self-interest in this case would be overridden by mutual collective aspirations.

For different reasons, one would not expect individuals who subscribe to a capitalistic sensibility to be particularly convinced of the efficacy of such ritual, combining as it does realms of spiritual and natural beliefs with material exchanges. A western-styled rationalist would presumably be able to make very little sense of all this "magic." The indigenous capitalist would hardly wish to surrender his goods for a collective goal which, in terms of scientific probabilities, has little chance of working. Would such individuals recognize that whether rain came or not was less the point than that the community coalesced around its collective moral interest? Whether the logic of capitalistic self-interest could be subordinated to the code of collective interest remains problematic. In so far as there is a dismantling of the traditional codes, one can predict that this cosmological tenant of the sky impregnating the earth as a result of the "bride of the rain" ritual will lessen its hold over the

indigenous belief system. This has happened elsewhere when the essence of ritual has disappeared, its remnants to be displayed from time to time by bureaucrats for the edification and amusement of tourists.

SEVEN

Coda

WE HAVE TAKEN YOU, perhaps, on a longer route than you cared to go, back to our beginning. In this excursion into Berber ethnography, we have suggested that Rifi society is organized around an oppositional contrast. One set of potentialities is balanced by an alternative one. In some cases, alternativity is expressed in sexual terms; in others, in generational terms; in yet others, through modes of action. The Rifi seem to take the attitude that there are ways of doing things properly, but following a divergent path is wise and sensible. Indeed, to follow slavishly the norms of Rifi culture in all particulars and circumstances would be bizarre.

One could argue that the Rifi do not have a cultural system, at least not in the sense in which we usually use "system." The social world that the Rifi inhabit is too arbitrary to fulfill the categorical necessities of systematic relationships. Can we speak of a system when the values underlying action seem to share no collective dimension? We can, of course, assert that individualistic, competitive action is permissible and such action constitutes a systemic alternative to collective solidarity. Or we can argue that there are two structures that are in a constant state of flux, one continually becoming a transformation of the other. Both these statements are probably true and most certainly unhelpful. The first suggests that there is a possibility of two codes working simultaneously in the same society. Despite the naive efforts of anthropologists to suggest otherwise, this is so manifestly true as to be unworthy of comment. In fact, the logic of arbitrary systems of conventions suggests that

any one aggregate of humans might have ten or two hundred different codes, some more and others less, which are fundamental to the basic configuration of the society. Alternatively, the oscillation theory simply recognizes a statistical bell-shaped curve in which a portion of semantic values falls off on one side and the remainder tumbles onto the other.

Anthropologists have tended to look at societies as coherent, which they rarely are, and to explain the worlds they view in a coherent manner. A coherence of cultural explication is more easily achieved than the objective experience of culture itself, which might be described, if we were from a non-Hegelian tradition, as a "mess." Like most anthropological inquests, our exploration is theoretically and descriptively incomplete.

Our descriptive incompleteness is obvious since we have decoded only selective slices of a cultural system. This is an inevitable process—written ethnographies resemble documentary films: what has been left out in the editing process is greater than what has remained. Our hope is that what has been included is more central than what has been excluded, but the principle of ethnographic selection is a matter of interpretive judgment. In Peirce's discussion of firstness, secondness, and thirdness, a series of related phenomena consists not of absolute facts but of probabilities. In the search for regularities, there is no reason to suspect that, after establishing some relationship between seemingly interconnected elements in a series (first-, second-, and thirdness), a connection will not be dismissed or corrected by the accident of more complete information. Part of the difficulty of an open semiotics is that the final interpretant, by which one can guarantee that one has measured all elements that can be measured, is always in the future, hauntingly outside the grasp of the categories one has constructed. One difference between the semiotic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Peirce is that Peirce attempted to measure more complex phenomena. Peirce's field was scientific measurement; he was thus aware of inexactitude. Interpreting a cultural system, one proposes a correct "reading," but Peirce knew there were no guarantees that such an interpretation would be correct and final. His *projection* of an interpretation is always tentative and revisable (Savon, 1981). Scientific epistemologies do not reveal truth but approximate it. Every investigation of culture is fallible, although one need not elevate fallibility to a privileged excuse for avoiding attempts to apprehend the world.

An anthropological study of signs must of necessity be an open rather than a closed system. The reason the ultimate interpretation remains incomplete is because the thing being interpreted is itself incomplete. Cultures are vibrant, dynamic entities affected by their own internal contradictions and dislocations as well as by the external world, which constantly impinges upon their constitution. Concepts such as a "tradition" are vague and ambiguous. Meaning is a process of redistribution and therefore can never be precisely defined. Since cultures comprise an indefinite multiplicity of interpretants (customs, habits, and new objective conditions of existence), the thing interpreted is in constant flux, inciting new interpretations.

Our initial premise is that cultures consist of different sign systems, and, in some fashion, these sign systems, drawn from disparate realms, converge. We have followed Peirce's argument that a sign is "translatable into an infinite series of other signs which, in some regards, are always mutually equivalent" (Jakobson, 1980: 10). However, our inquiry has not been oriented so much toward an understanding of any sign as to a *system* of signification. Systems consist of both mental representations and human activities that operate in conjunction with one another to produce meaning. In examining a number of signs, we have noted that there is often a fundamental dichotomy between two potentials; although we have found redundancies of each of these potentials, agonism and solidarity, the more important discovery has been of the redundancy of the dichotomy. In each modality there is both consensus and provocation, an interplay that creates a conditional rather than an absolute semiotic discourse.

This vision of semiotics runs counter to structuralism, which seeks to discover the underlying uniformities and harmonies of primitive societies. Every semiotic analysis of culture is indebted at some level to Lévi-Strauss; but his inquiry into the cultural "game" gives us no analytic purchase if the players disagree on the structure of the rules, or if the rules are open to multiple interpretations, or if the game itself is in dispute.

Lévi-Strauss, like Saussure before him, was perfectly aware that signs were hinged to social life. At a time when most anthropologists were trying to show that "things were things," Lévi-Strauss was pursuing a more dangerous trail: "the quality of things lies in their relationships." That we now accept an absence of ontological assurances reflects the hard-fought point that Saussure, Jakobson,

Lévi-Strauss, and others were trying to make: the forms through which we experience and shape the world are simply indexical signs of relationships between objects within a specified context of social activity.

In examining the structures adjacent to marriage, admittedly a limiting aspect of Rifi life, we have isolated a number of different sign systems having to do with alliances, ritual, gift giving, aesthetic expression, and material objects such as the wedding chest and the bread shovel. Each one of these systems can be analyzed independently of the others, but the organization of each has contextual redundancy with the others. Thus we note that Rifi alliance can be divided into two parts: contractual and agonistic relations. The interplay of this opposition can be found in areas outside the discussion of this study such as blood feuding and the payment of blood money. The question of whom one allies oneself with, however, sets up one of the basic contrarieties in Rifi society. One, although not the exclusive, means of alliance is through marriage and the establishment of affinal linkages. In examining such marriage alliances and strategies, we have noted a number of cleavages; not only do fathers seek to establish favorable alliances, but mothers and adolescents also participate in the general strategy of creating relationships. The entire community strives toward some collective sense of its identity, but there are also agonistic cleavages between sexes and generations. Although marriage is a means of establishing contractual obligations, selection of mates is carried on within a polemic and manipulative context. The apparent discontinuities between interpretations based on a strict lineage model and those based on an *ad hoc* model both resolve and exacerbate the tension between the opposite potentialities which constantly impinge upon each other.

Having concluded that one of the regularities of Rifi society, at least in the area of alliance, is a conditional quality whereby actions are balanced between the potentialities of individualistic manipulation and collective solidarity, we explored other systems adjacent to marriage alliance to see if the pattern of this division could be observed elsewhere. Our findings suggest that the logic of this conditionality can be detected in the very language by which Rifi refer to contracts. Since the conditional *n-shala* is appended to every agreement, the term acts as a meta-comment on the tenuousness of human contracts and relationships. The successful completion of an

agreement between two individuals is conditional on a third party whose absoluteness transcends human relations. As a linguistic marker, *n-shala* acts as an ontological critique of human intentions and passions.

The conditional quality of alliances and contracts is not simply a matter of asserting solidarity with one group of individuals and withdrawing it from another; rather, it is part of a larger grammar of morals, intentions, and passions in which Rifi work out the problem of trust and suspicion. Solidarity is not simply a matter of drawing upon one's friends, nor is agonism a means of identifying one's enemies. One can, in fact, enter into contracts and develop patterns of solidarity with enemies or have agonistic relationships with one's friends. Rifi relations are not characterized by certainty but by doubt, as both contract and agonism constantly implicate one another, the one subverting the other. Relationships are not immanent within the cultural text but rather constantly problematic and in the process of being negotiated. The effects of this negotiation are that relationships are constituted and reconstituted as reactions to a variety of cultural permutations. The *dhamghra* is a means of creating new relationships and solidifying old ones. The gift between the fathers of the bride and groom to create new relationships is characterized by a certain suspicion and distrust, as witnessed by the fact that these exchanges are the result of hard negotiations and become part of a written contract. It is instructive that the word for safe-conduct through alien territory (*zettata*) is related to the term for the initial sugar-cone gift in marriage negotiations (*zattat*). In either case there is both distrust and an attempt to create a surety of trust. The conditional agonistic quality is reduced in *ghramth* exchanges between guests and host, but it is nonetheless present because not even ritual gift giving can assure loyalty and contractual alliance.

Viewing the Rifi world as unitarian is as inaccurate as viewing it as one of challenge; both aspects are constantly evoked, as we have noted in examining the relationship between men and women. Certainly in the division of labor each sex contributes in a collective manner to the survival of the community, as does each in natural reproduction. The *dhamghra* ceremony itself is a means of establishing contracts between husbands and wives and legitimizing the family. Equally there is an agreement between the sexes on what constitutes honor and what constitutes shame. There is a division

of conceptual labor; men defend honor, whereas women are largely responsible for defining reputations. But if there is a contractual reciprocity between the sexes, there is also a discordant agonism. Both mothers and daughters participate in mate selection, often in a manner that challenges the intentions of men. Moreover, the dances and songs at the wedding ceremony are devices that allow women to participate in the formulation of public polity. Every sign system, with the exception of those which involve God or a transcendent quality larger than the community (Allah, the Qu'ran, saints, and natural forces such as droughts), is cleaved into a double code. Rifi social life is not an inchoate jumble but a well-defined set of possibilities. It is not an absurd existence but a "surd" one (a mute sound from the Arabic *jadhr asamm,* "deaf root"): what is "voiced" in Rifi life is always countered by a voiceless possibility of contrapuntal opposition. While every sign system displays resonances of other sign systems, each also displays a consistent dissonance within itself, a dissonance that has a redundancy from one sign system to the next.

Although Rifi culture reiterates certain dispositions from one sign system to another, there are no fixed or closed semiotic "rules." There are certain schemata for organizing society and making communication sensible; these schemata are, however, once removed from the primary modeling system which is an interdependent world filled with flux and contradictions. The *bled-as-siba* disappeared long ago; but the land of an absolute monarchy living in isolation from the remainder of the world also disappeared. The children of Rifi parents who once asked us if California were in southern Morocco now not only know where California is but may have traveled there or to places very like it. The net of meaning we investigated in 1965–66 was already becoming unwoven. The cultural objects that semiotics investigate are, for better or worse, always open. Our interpretation is simply a projection and, as such, tentative and revisable. Sadly, in the interrogation of cultures, there are always more thorns than there are roses.

Glossary

'adhawth. Bloodfeud.

addjun. A tambourine used, among other purposes, to accompany the quartets of Berber girls who sing at the weddings.

aganja. The large, ladle-shaped shovel used for placing loaves of bread in an oven and also dressed as a bride in the "Bride of the Rain" ritual.

Aith Waryaghar. (*Aith,* literally "people of") The largest tribe of the central Rif.

ajhaj. Trousseau and possession for the bride, usually provided by the groom or his father. The money for the items of the *ajhaj* comes from the *sdhaq* or dowry payment stipulated in the marriage contract and paid by the groom's family.

akhammas. An agricultural worker who exchanges his labor in return for one-fifth of the harvest grown on another man's land. This is the most common form of contractual labor (*dhashrixth*) in the Rif.

al-lif-ino (-inu). A phrase of endearment meaning "Oh, my darling" that is common in the lyrics composed by young Berber women. See also *lif* for a definition of the term's use in times of bloodfeud.

amdhyaz (*imdhyazen,* pl.). A professional male musician or singer, hired to perform at the more elaborate Berber weddings and for other ceremonial events.

amghar (*imgharen,* pl.). Literally, an adult male, this term is also used to designate a member or leader of a rural council at either the community, clan, or tribal level. It is also the kinship term by which a wife refers to her father-in-law.

anzar. Rain; see also *dhasrith u-unzar* for the "Bride of the Rain" ceremony.

asunduq. The wedding box or chest that contains the bride's trousseau

(ajhaj) and accompanies her in the procession from her father's home to that of her groom's father (cf., the Moroccan Arabic term *a'mâmer,* bridal box or bier).

ay-aralla-buya. Phrase used as a chorus to introduce the songs (izran) composed and performed by young Berber women at Rifi weddings; used also to mean wedding songs.

baba. Father; *buya* in *ay-aralla-buya* may be a form of the word, meaning in this case father of the bride.

baraka. A sign of favor from Allah, often seen in material terms so that a man of *baraka* might be blessed by being wealthy. Although a spiritual quality, *baraka* is viewed in concrete enough terms to be considered part of a respected man's estate; he can choose among his children to designate who will receive his *baraka* at his death. Although in the ordinary sense *baraka* usually means benediction or blessing, when possessed in sufficient quality, it is felt to endow its owner with the power to perform miracles and with sainthood.

bebe. An expensive long dress of silk or other costly fabrics worn on festive occasions by women in the Rif.

bled -al-makhzen. Moroccan land under the control of the Sultan.

bled-as-siba. "Land of dissidence" not under the control of the Sultan; the central Rif came under rule of a central government only with European colonization in this century and is now subject to the authority of Morocco's Sultan Hassan II.

dchar. The local community, often synonymous in the Rif with "village," in the sense of widely scattered rather than closely placed household sites.

dhadhuggwatsh. Kinship term used by a man to designate his mother-in-law.

dhamghra. Generic term for the three-day ceremony of the Rifi wedding; also used to refer to the third day of the wedding, when the bride, in an elaborate procession, is moved from her father's house to that of the groom's father.

dhamurth nj-bur. Dry-farmed, unirrigated land.

dhamurth-w-aman. Irrigated land.

dhaqbitch. The tribe, the largest unit of political organization in the Rif.

dharfiqin. See *dharfiqth,* s.

dharfiqth (pl. *dharfiqin),* Lineage based on putative agnatic relations.

dhasrith u-unzar. The "Bride of the Rain" ritual performed by Berber women in times of drought; a bread shovel (*aganja*) is dressed as a bride for the sky. For the comparable ceremony observed by males at the mosque, see *sadaqa* and *tittan unzar.*

dhashrixth. An agricultural contract for sharecropping; also a kinship term for co-wife.

dhawarth. Door, gate, sometimes threshold.

dhazuhrith. Sorceress or female magician.

dhfurjth. The shuffling dance performed by young Berber women as they sing songs at the weddings.

dhittawin ta'affanain. The evil eye.

dhiwxsi. Gifts presented by guests at the wedding to help the father of the groom meet the costs of the wedding celebrations at his own home and that of the bride. See also *ghramth.*

dhiwzirin. The unmarried young women who serve as representatives of the bride or groom and sing and dance at Berber weddings. The *dhiwzirin* of the bride accompany her to the groom's house on the third day of the wedding, remaining with her until the end of the public festivities.

fades. A bush used for making soap in the Rif.

fqih (pl. *tulba).* A religious specialist who teaches the Qur'an; Rifi often obtain written quotations from the Qur'an from the *tulba,* which they then use as magical charms.

ghramth. Gifts of money presented by women to the bride and by men to the father of the groom or the groom himself on the third day of the wedding.

(r)*hanni.* Henna, a cosmetic dye worn on the hands of women in the Rif; during weddings, it is applied ritually to the bride and groom and their attendants; the term also means manure.

(r-) *hanni amqqran.* Literally "the big henna," this is the ceremony on the second night of the wedding when henna is applied to the hands and feet of the bride and groom and their attendants.

(r-) *hanni amzzyan.* Literally "the little henna," this is the initial ceremony, taking place on the first night of the wedding, in which henna is applied to the bride and groom and their attendants.

Ibuqquyen. A tribe of the Central Rif that practices agriculture and, along the coast, small-boat fishing.

ijujga. See *jajgu,* s.

Igzinnayen. A tribe of the central Rif culturally indistinct from the Aith Waryaghar or Ibuqquyen but part of the area colonized by France.

ikfin. Festive and decorative floor-length gown worn by Berber women for special occasions.

imazilen. Literally "shameless ones," these people of a hereditary low class tend to be landless and hence to follow occupations such as barbering or butchering that expose them to public view. The professional male musicians and singers who perform for pay at Berber weddings are *imazilen.*

imdhyazen. See *amdhyaz,* s., and *imazilen.*

imgharan. See *amghar,* s.

imrabdhen. Members of a high social class descended from the Prophet Mohammed (cf. the Arabic terms *sharif,* s., and *shurfa,* pl.).

inibjiwen. Male guests at a Berber wedding.

iwziren. Male escorts ("supporters") of the groom, who accompany him for the three-day wedding ceremony and participate in the henna ceremonies with him.

izran. See *izri,* s.

izri (izran, pl.). Songs composed and performed by young Berber women at Rifi weddings.

jajgu (ijujga, pl.). A group of families that forms an agnatic sublineage.

jinn (jnun, pl.). A malevolent spirit under the direction of *shit'an,* the Devil, who does harm to humans, must be placated or misdirected, and haunts places associated with blood or water.

jnun. See *jinn,* s.

jma'th. A council that establishes public polity (see also *amghar*).

(r)*kighadh n-z-zujiya.* The marriage document, written and witnessed by a *fqih* or religious notable.

kif. *Cannabis sativa,* a plant whose leaves are dried and smoked as a narcotic; principally grown in northern Morocco in Ketama.

khamsa. The number five; see also *akhammas,* the most common type of sharecropper in the Rif.

(r-)*khdhubith.* The betrothal period for an engaged couple; it begins once the bride and groom's representatives seriously start negotiating the marriage contract.

liff. Alliances; also "sweetheart" or "darling."

liffino. (*Liff* with first-person singular possessive form, *ino*) My darling, my sweetheart, my ally.

mahr. Arabic term for dowry; see *sdhaq.*

mali. Songs of the professional male musicians (cf., *izri*).

memsah l-hare. Maghribi Arabic term meaning good evening.

mkhanzi. A government employee.

mulay. A term meaning "sultan" and used to address the groom during the wedding ceremony.

n'shala. "If God so wills it," a phrase often added to Rifi plans or promises to do something in the future.

nubath. The kinship unit of the nuclear family.

qadi. Islamic judge or magistrate; among other functions, he countersigns and seals the marriage document.

qasida. A traditional form of Arabic poetry.

qbila. Arabic term for tribe (cf., *dhaqbitch*).

qubbth. Grapevines that are curved into an arch to support the bride's headdress; perhaps related to *qubba,* both the Berber and Arabic term for the dome of a saint's tomb.

rba' (r-urbu', pl.). A subdivision of the tribe. Hart labels this level "clan"; Coon calls it "canton."

sadaqa. The division of a sacrificed animal by males during the rain ceremony; see also *tittan unzar. Sadaqa* is also the generic term for alms.

sdhaq. Wedding dowry given the bride's father and usually provided by the father of the groom. The *sdhaq* is used to purchase the bride's new possessions and clothing.

sharif (shurfa, pl.). The Arabic term for members of the holy lineage that traces its descent to the Prophet Mohammed (see also *imrabdhen*).

shdhih. The sexually provocative dances performed by young Berber women between songs at the wedding; see also *dhfurjth,* for a description of a simpler step that accompanies the songs themselves.

shit'an. The Devil.

shurfa. See *sharif,* s.

siba-n-tislit. Seventh-day ceremony of the bride, when she is visited for the first time since the wedding by members of her family of both sexes. This ceremony ends the "honeymoon" week after the wedding.

subhain er-razik. The songs sung by the male escorts of the groom during the wedding.

suhur. Sorcery, spell, magical charm.

suq (swaq, pl.). The market or marketplace; in the Rif, markets rotate throughout the week, meeting on a particular day in a specified place (e.g., the Wednesday market is always in the same location).

swaq a-tmgharin. Women's markets, which can be attended only by female vendors and customers; they tend to be located on the border between two tribes, allowing for the exchange of goods between the two.

tabour. A small hand drum used on many occasions in the Rif; the female singers (*dhiwzirin*) at weddings accompany their songs with the *tabour.*

tarifit. A form of Berber, related to the *zenatiya* dialect, spoken by the tribes Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen.

tariqa. Literally "path," this term is used also for Sufi brother- and sisterhoods.

tasebnath. The unusually decorative scarf, made of silk or other rich fabric with a long, soft fringe, that is worn by Berber women for festive events; it is also used as part of the bride's headdress at the wedding processional from her house to the groom's.

tazin. A stew of vegetables and, when available, meat that is eaten with barley bread and is a mainstay of the Rifian diet.

titan unzar. Ceremony during which Rifi males sacrifice a bull at the rural mosque while Berber women perform the "Bride of the Rain" ritual; these complementary events are aimed at bringing rain in periods of drought.

tulba. See *fqih,* s.

uzi'ath. Custom by which members of the *dchar* are obligated to purchase portions of meat when a member of the community sacrifices an animal.

wanu. A well.

yallah. A term meaning roughly "let's go" or "come on" which is used in the Rif to hurry or encourage others.

zattat. The gifts given by the groom or his representative on the first visit to the father of the bride to begin negotiating a marriage contract; the gifts always include a cone of sugar, which the father of the bride can use or ignore to indicate whether or not he is willing to consider the suitor as a son-in-law.

zenatiya. The Berber dialect to which *Tarifit,* spoken by the Aith Waryaghar and Ibuqquyen, is related.

zigharit. Ululation, the sound produced by trilling the tongue against the roof the mouth, by which Rifi women express approval. At the wedding, women who are past the age of childbearing often observe the *dhwizrin* as they sing and dance, ululating to applaud a song or after prestations of *gramth* to the groom and his father.

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